



Esek Hopkins Middle School

Providence

The SALT Visit Team Report

December 6, 2002



School Accountability for Learning and Teaching (SALT)

The accountability program of the Rhode Island Department of Education

The findings of this report are those of this SALT visit team. The names and affiliations of the members of the team are in the appendix. The team follows the school visit protocol in the *Handbook for Chairs on Conducting a SALT School Visit*. The team is required to focus on what it observes at the time of the visit and is restricted from comparing the school with any other. This school visit was supported by the Rhode Island Department of Education as one component of its accountability system, School Accountability for Learning and Teaching (SALT).

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

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1. THE PURPOSE AND LIMITS of this report

Overview

This is the report of the SALT team that visited Esek Hopkins Middle School from December 2 through 6, 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 Esek Hopkins 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 Esek Hopkins Middle School.

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

◆ *observing a total of 173 complete and partial classes. The team spent a total of over 133 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 10 students 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, many teachers, many staff, and school administrators*

◆ *reviewing completed and ongoing student work*

◆ *discussing student work with teachers*

◆ *analyzing five years of state assessment results as reported in Information Works!*

◆ *reviewing the following documents:*

Administrative Procedures, Rekindling the Dream, One Student at a Time, Providence Schools

Rekindling the Dream, A framework for Reform in the Providence Schools, November 17, 1999

Providence Teacher Contract Proposal, 2002

Lift Framework for Teaching and Learning, Working Document, Department of Language and Culture, Providence Public Schools, August, 1999

Providence Public Schools District Wide Code of Behavior, Grades K-5, Grades 6-12

Providence Schools Standards Scope and Sequence, Providence Schools, Field Test Document, July 22, 2002

Teacher Evaluation Handbook for Probationary and Tenured Teachers, Providence School Department, Providence Teachers Union, Providence, Rhode Island

Providence Public Schools Strategic Technology Plan, 1997-2000

1998 Update, Long Range Technology Plan, Technology Planning Committee

Providence Schools Report Card

Counting on Ourselves, The Providence Demography Initiative/ A First Portrait: Schools

Stanford Achievement Test Series, Compendium of Instruction Objectives, Ninth Edition

district and school policies and practices

Esek Hopkins Middle School SALT Visit binder

records of professional development activities

classroom assessments

Esek Hopkins Middle School Providence One Plan, 2002-2003 (the school improvement plan)

school improvement recommendations

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

The full visit team built the conclusions, commendations, and recommendations presented here through intense and thorough discussion. The team met for a total of 31 hours in nine separate meetings spanning the five days of the visit. This time is exclusive of the time the team spent in classrooms, with teachers, and in meetings with students, parents, and school and district administrators.

The team must agree that every conclusion in this report:

is important enough to include in the report.

is supported by the evidence the team has gathered during the visit.

is set in the present.

contains the judgment of the team.

Using the Report

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

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

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

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

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

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

2. PROFILE OF Esek Hopkins Middle School

Background

Named after the first Admiral of the Continental Navy, Esek Hopkins Middle School in Providence, Rhode Island, first opened its doors to students in 1916. It remained open until 1979, when it closed due to decreased enrollment in the Providence schools. For 11 years, the school served as the Central Administrative Offices for the Providence School Department. In 1990, Esek Hopkins reopened as a middle school. The school was extensively renovated

, and a cafeteria and science classrooms were added at this time. Esek Hopkins School is located in an urban neighborhood and is bordered by two major highways. The population in this north end neighborhood of Providence is made up of a diverse group of new immigrants, who present a challenge as the school strives to meet the many resulting needs of a diverse student body.

A staff of a principal, two assistant principals, 43 teachers, four Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT)

[LO1](#) staff, three guidance counselors, six teacher assistants, one school nurse, one librarian and three custodial staff services the school.

Of the 583 students in attendance, 261 (45%) are Hispanic, 157 (27%) are black, 131 (22%) are white, 30 (5%) are Asian, and four (1%) are Native American

. Twenty-three percent of the school's population receives special education services. These include: three self-contained classrooms with 30 students, one behavior disordered classroom with 10 students, one intensive resource classroom with 18 students, one inclusion model classroom with 10 students, and a resource program that accommodates approximately 75 students. One hundred percent of the students receive free breakfast, and 87% receive free or reduced-price lunch.

During the past several years, Esek Hopkins has experienced consistent and on-going changes in its administration, as well as in its teachers and secretarial staff. The loss of its Parent Teachers Organization reduced parental involvement, as well as communication between school and home. The foci on teaching and learning as well as discipline and structure were minimized. Since February 2002, with a new administration, guidance team, parent teachers organization and teaching staff in place, the school has begun to stabilize.

A focus is now on improved student learning and proper discipline. The school is pursuing partnerships with two community businesses, and professional development workshops occur twice monthly.

The school is organized into six academic teams, and students are grouped heterogeneously in all subjects except algebra and foreign language. After school programs include: Violence is Bad Education (VIBE); boat building; remedial math and literacy; and the Skill-Tutor Ramp Up program.

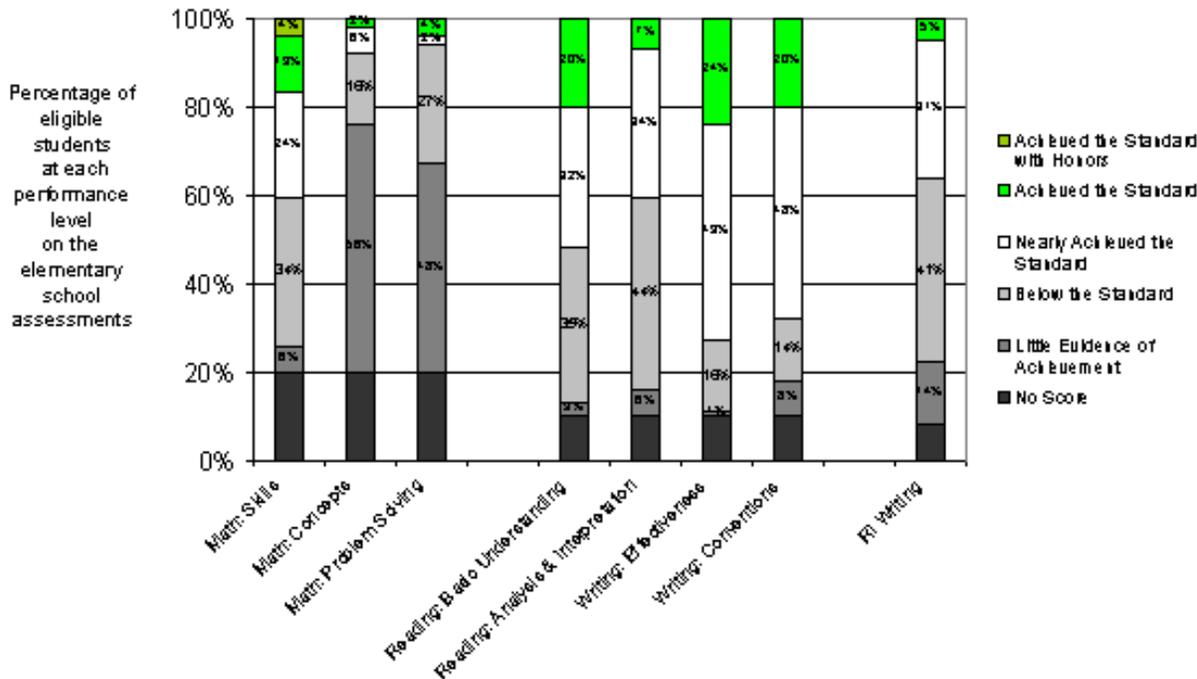
State Assessment Results for Esek Hopkins Middle School

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. 2001-02 Student Results on Rhode Island State Assessments

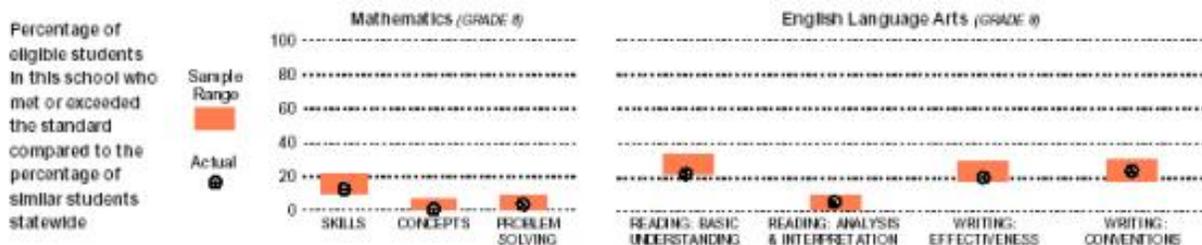


Very few eighth grade students achieved the standard on all subtests of the 2002 New Standards Reference Examination, with percentages of students at standard ranging from two to 24 percent. Four percent achieved the standard with honors on the mathematics basic skills subtest but no student performed at this level on the other six subtests. Additionally, 20 percent of students in math and ten percent of students in reading and writing are represented in the no score category.

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

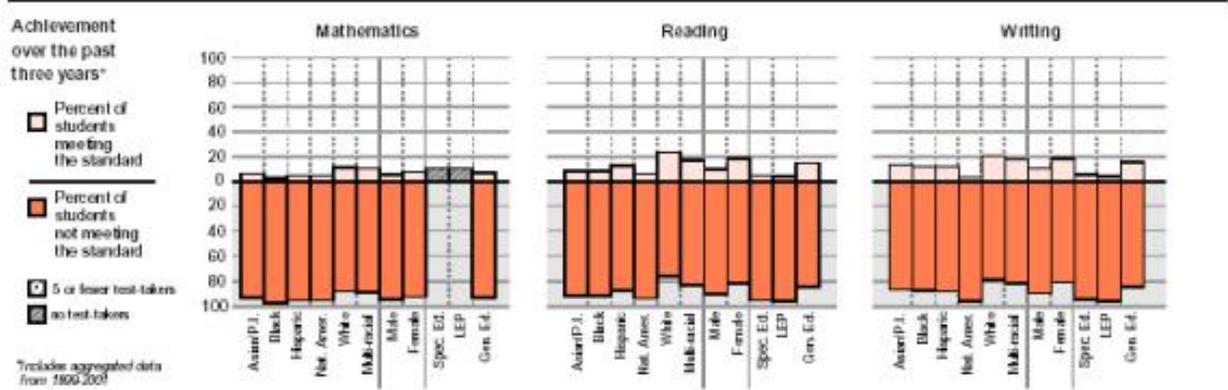


Eighth grade students at Esek Hopkins Middle School performed as well as similar students statewide on all seven subtests on the 2002 New Standards Reference Examination.

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

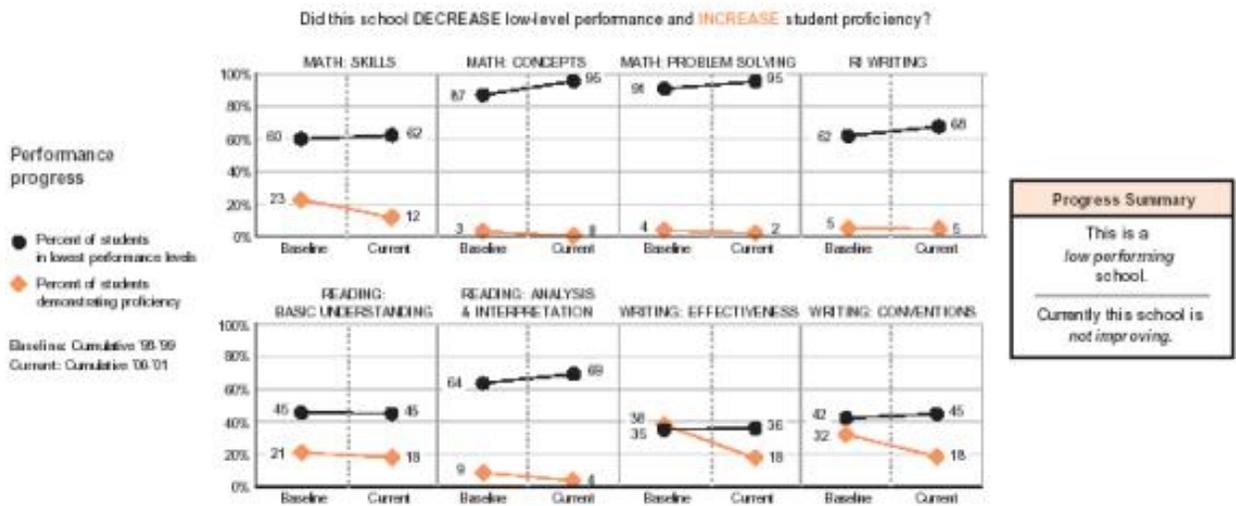


Equity gaps in performance exist among ethnic groups as compared to the performance of white students as well as among special education students and English language learners (LEP) as compared to general education students in both the reading and writing subtests of the New Standards Reference Examination.

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



Performance progress indicators show that there are decreases in percentages of students demonstrating proficiency in all tests but RI Writing and increases in the percentages of students in the lowest performance levels in all tests but Reading: Basic Understanding. The performance level of students at Esek Hopkins is declining on every test.

Information Works! data for Esek Hopkins Middle School is available at <<http://www.rido.net>>www.rido.net.

3. PORTRAIT OF Esek Hopkins Middle School AT THE TIME OF THE VISIT

Esek Hopkins is an old school with a fresh coat of paint. Colorful murals and finely wrought examples of student work decorate the walls. During class time, the hallways are quiet, and the classrooms bustle with activity. Students participate in a variety of activities that involve reading, writing and math. They feel at ease with their teachers, peers and the environment and allow their spirits and personalities to shine. Many teachers are eager to see their students succeed and are determined to provide them with the best possible learning environment. Some tirelessly prepare innovative teaching approaches to captivate and hold their students' attentions. The new administrative team works well together, keeping the school orderly and safe.

Esek Hopkins is a school in transition. It recently underwent several administrative and staff changes, which resulted in turmoil. The current administration and staff provide a more stable foundation for improved student learning and teaching. Progress is evident, as overall morale improves in the school. However, some obstacles impede effective school improvement. These include the lack of: clear and open communication at all levels within the system; classroom supplies and books for teachers and students; a vertically articulated curriculum in all subjects; consistent and high expectations for behavior and academic performance among all teachers; parent engagement in the school; and the optimal utilization of all types of student support services.

4. FINDINGS ON STUDENT LEARNING

Sources of Evidence

- ◆ *reviewing completed and ongoing student work*
- ◆ *following students*
- ◆ *observing classes*
- ◆ *talking with students, teachers and school administrators*
- ◆ *reviewing classroom assessments*
- ◆ *discussing student work with teachers*
- ◆ *meeting with the students*
- ◆ *2002 New Standards English Language Arts Reference Examination School Summary*
- ◆ *2002 New Standards Mathematics Reference Examination School Summary*
- ◆ *reviewing school improvement plan*

Conclusions

Some students actively write in journals; they write research papers, brochures, laboratory reports, narratives, persuasive pieces, reflections, and their responses to literature and math. They write prolifically across all disciplines, peer editing and revising their work as they follow the writing process. Students effectively use rubrics as guidelines and directions to develop their writing in an effort to meet the standards. They proudly and eagerly invite others to read what they have written and share their work in read alouds.

Many students have a positive attitude about their efforts to improve their writing, and they celebrate their successes. They exhibit creativity, if not competence. Their developing skills and attitudes will result in improved learning and performance on the New Standards Reference Examination. (*following students, observing classes, talking with students and teachers, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, reviewing classroom assessments, discussing student work with teachers*)

Many students show an interest in reading a variety of printed material in class. They listen attentively, as teachers read aloud to them. However, when some students read aloud from textbooks, novels and plays, the attention of the other students often wanes, and they lose their focus. Students pay more attention when fellow classmates read from their own writing. For the most part, students successfully answer recall questions, but many have difficulty answering questions that are interpretive or cause them to think critically. Students are reading, but are they understanding? These observations concur with the test results. While 20 percent are achieving the standard in basic understanding, only seven percent do so in analysis and interpretation. While students are attentive and enjoy their teachers' modeling of reading, they do not take an active part in improving their own reading skills by reading independently. (*observing classes, following students, talking with students and teachers, meeting with the students, discussing student work with teachers, 2002 New Standards English Language Arts Reference Examination School Summary*)

Students experience math in many different ways. Some measure, graph, calculate and solve problems across the disciplines. They also create plans to build various projects, draw to scale, read digital displays, and utilize fractions in authentic applications. However, many students have difficulty because they lack basic math skills, read below grade level and their writing skills are not adequate enough to explain their work. Few students achieve the standard on the 2002 New Standards

Mathematics Reference Examination. (*following students, observing classes, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, discussing student work with teachers, talking with students and teachers, 2002 New Standards Mathematics Reference Examination School Summary*)

Many students do not understand their role in the learning process and the importance of attending school regularly. They are not ready to accept responsibility for doing the necessary work to become accomplished learners. Many do not do their homework, assigned reading, or journal and log entries. They do not do their class assignments in a timely manner, listen attentively in class, or behave in a manner that is conducive to learning. Also, most students lack organizational skills. They generally do not take responsibility for their own learning, either in the classroom or at home. (*following students, observing classes, talking with students, teachers, and school administrators, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, discussing student work with teachers, reviewing school improvement plan*)

Commendations for Esek Hopkins Middle School

Polite, personable students

Recommendations for Esek Hopkins Middle School

Encourage the full writing process across the disciplines.

Continue to foster the students' creativity in writing.

Continue to use rubrics to provide students with clear and high expectations.

Find ways to encourage independent reading among your students, including their increased use of the library.

Continue to model expressive and fluent reading.

Provide students with meaningful opportunities to develop their skills in comprehension, interpretation and critical thinking.

Reinforce basic math skills across all disciplines.

Expand the meaningful opportunities for students to perform practical applications of math in all curricular areas.

Continue to integrate students' reading and writing skills with their problem solving skills.

Establish and consistently support clear and high expectations for all students.

Expand and continue to model and structure effective organizational techniques for your students.

Provide all students with daily agenda books to help them improve their organizational skills.

Continue to support efforts to improve student achievement through your after school programs and community partnerships.

Implement a peer mediation program to facilitate improved student behavior.

5. FINDINGS ON TEACHING

Sources of Evidence

- ◆ *observing classes*
- ◆ *observing the school outside of the classroom*
- ◆ *talking with students, teachers, and school administrators*
- ◆ *meeting with the school improvement team, students, school and district administrators and parents*
- ◆ *discussing student work with teachers*
- ◆ *reviewing classroom textbooks*
- ◆ *reviewing completed and ongoing student work*
- ◆ *following students*

Conclusions

Many teachers exhibit a devotion to the teaching profession. They enjoy the dynamics of teaching at the middle school level. They are innovative in their instruction practices and create inviting classroom environments that captivate their students. Due to the present lack of supplies and materials, some teachers are financially generous in supporting their class programs and their supplemental activities. The principal affirms that the supplies are forthcoming. Most teachers are caring. They exhibit a positive attitude toward their students and colleagues, whom they consider as ‘family.’ Some teachers provide support for second language learners within their classrooms. Many are persistent in their pursuits to educate their students and refuse to give up on either their students or their school. (*observing classes, observing the school outside of the classroom, meeting with the school improvement team, students, school and district administrators and parents, talking with students, teachers, and school administrators, following students*)

Many teachers work to raise their students’ expectations of themselves. They not only model good behavior, but also encourage it, and they design lessons that foster it. However, students receive mixed messages, because some teachers have low expectations for their behavior and allow a few students to disrupt the learning of the many. (*following students, observing classes, talking with students, teachers, and school administrators, meeting with the students, school administrators and parents*)

Most teachers expect students to work successfully toward the standards and to learn and progress, both academically and socially. They see themselves as models and coaches, addressing the whole child in this diverse population. In contrast, some teachers do not promote high expectations of student learning, accepting the notion that most of their students are working to the best of their abilities. (*following students, observing classes, talking with students, teachers, and school administrators, discussing student work with teachers, reviewing completed and ongoing student work*)

Best teaching practices are evident in some classes. Some teachers teach not only content, but also ways to construct knowledge and learn the content. Some teachers utilize varied instructional strategies to meet the needs of their students. Others exhibit a one-size-fits-all mentality and design lessons that they think meet the needs of the whole classroom. With this approach they do not differentiate the instruction to meet the needs of all of their students within their mixed ability classrooms. (*following students, observing classes, reviewing classroom textbooks, talking with students and teachers, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, discussing student work with teachers*)

Commendations for Esek Hopkins Middle School

Some excellent teaching throughout the school

Many caring, hopeful teachers

Recommendations for Esek Hopkins Middle School

Nurture your devotion to your Esek Hopkins family.

Model positive behavior and consistently hold students to high expectations of their behavior.

Promote high academic expectations and strive for all students to achieve or exceed standards.

Differentiate instruction to meet the needs of all students within your classrooms.

Use your excellent teachers as mentors for the faculty so they may hone their instructional skills.

Provide teachers with the necessary instruction supplies.

Continue to support the second language learners.

Recommendations for Providence School District

Provide extensive professional development for all teachers so they can follow through on the above recommendations.

6. FINDINGS ON THE SCHOOL

Sources of Evidence

- ◆ *observing classes*
- ◆ *observing the school outside of the classroom*
- ◆ *talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrators*
- ◆ *reviewing 2002 SALT Survey report*
- ◆ *2002 New Standard Reference Examination results*
- ◆ *meeting with the school improvement team, students, school and district administrators, and parents*
- ◆ *following students*
- ◆ *reviewing school improvement plan*
- ◆ *reviewing teacher contract*
- ◆ *reviewing district and school policies and practices*
- ◆ *reviewing school improvement recommendations*

Conclusions

Esek Hopkins Middle School is a safe, clean, well maintained facility. However, the building is occupied beyond its capacity, and it is not utilized effectively for its intended purpose as a middle school. Currently, this school is not functioning as a true middle school. Each grade is divided into two groups, but, for most, a true team identity is missing. Although common planning time is available to teachers after school, a formal planning time is not incorporated into their daily schedule. This makes it difficult for teachers to plan team activities and to integrate their lessons. The academic reinforcement periods (ARC) are not utilized to their full potential. The ineffective schedule eliminates the possibility of a set team time, and therefore does not support the effective implementation of the middle school concept. (*observing classes, observing the school outside of the classroom, meeting with the school improvement team, students, school and district administrators, parents, talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrators, following students, reviewing district and school policies and practices, reviewing teacher contract, reviewing school improvement recommendations*)

The climate of Esek Hopkins is warm and caring. The administrative team is providing a foundation for the development of a nurturing and supportive culture. The teachers' response to the administrative team is positive. However, the communication process necessary to sustain this culture is not yet established. Students indicate that they have no voice in their school. Parents indicate

their desire to participate more fully in the school as a whole, but they do not know how to do this. The protocols for efficient networkings within the school are ambiguous, resulting in confusion. This lack of communication is present not only throughout the school, but also in the district. District initiatives are not articulated clearly to the entire school community, which prevents the school from creating, establishing and sharing a clear vision for school improvement. (*observing classes, observing the school outside of the classroom, meeting with the school improvement team, students, school and district administrators, parents, reviewing school improvement plan, 2002 SALT Survey report, talking with students, teachers, staff and school administrators,*

reviewing district and school policies and practices, following students, reviewing school improvement recommendations)

The faculty has a history of mobility, as new teachers arrive throughout the school year. The school lacks an ongoing induction program and mentoring support services for these teachers. Some teachers experience a lack of direction in many facets of their profession. This includes routine duties, procedural responsibilities, and best practice in instruction. This interferes with their ability to be effective. *(observing classes, talking with teachers, students and school administrators, meeting with the school improvement team, school administrators and parents, reviewing teacher contract)*

The school struggles without a clear, consistent and articulated academic focus due to lack of a district wide curriculum. It is operating on a curricular framework; the scope and sequence, while a good starting point, is not sufficient or available in all disciplines. Teachers supplement this framework with various curricula, which limit the effective vertical articulation of content and skills. This makes it more difficult for the school to reach the district goal of having all students achieve at high levels. *(meeting with the school improvement team, school and district administrators and parents, talking with teachers, 2002 New Standards Reference Examination results, reviewing district and school policies and practices)*

In general, the school is aware of the academic and emotional needs of its students and has developed programs and support services to try to meet these needs. However, because of the demands of this diverse population, some students go through the day with their needs unsupported, while others wait for their needs to be identified. The team configuration in place here lends itself to teacher awareness and intervention. Without adequate team planning time to discuss student needs, teachers sometimes are unable to decide how best to address these situations within the team family. Also, although the eighth grade inclusion program is beneficial and successful, it does not address the needs of the sixth and seventh grade students, who also could benefit from such a program. Some support schedules limit contact time with students who need services. Partial support services inadequately support children and teachers. *(talking with teachers and staff, and school administrators, meeting with parents, observing classes, following students)*

Commendations for Esek Hopkins Middle School

Resourceful teachers

Recommendations for Esek Hopkins Middle School

Develop and implement a uniform standards-based curriculum in all disciplines with vertical and horizontal articulation.

Establish ongoing induction and mentoring programs for teachers.

Explore and establish additional support services for students, who do not qualify for special education services, including those with language acquisition .

Implement the inclusion program for students in sixth and seventh grades.

Revamp the schedule so that there is in-school common planning time for teachers to meet in teams.

Clarify your middle school concept, and establish a meaningful mission statement. Involve all stakeholders.

Expand and support parent involvement in the school. Follow through on the recommendations for school improvement you identified in your self-study.

Develop opportunities that encourage students to have voice and to be involved in the school.

Establish a clearly articulated protocol for all school procedures. Ensure that everyone is informed about this protocol and uses it.

Revise and distribute the handbook annually to articulate procedures for students, teachers and parents. Make this handbook available in the multiple languages that reflect your population.

Continue to support the after school ramp-up programs to improve student achievement.

Recommendations for Providence School District

Follow through on your plans for middle school redesign.

Articulate all district initiatives with the entire Hopkins community. Be sure that all stakeholders are clearly informed.

7. Final Advice to the School

The Esek Hopkins family is comprised of an eager, energetic and talented staff and a polite and personable student body. Your parents are eager to participate in the life of the school. Join together to implement a common vision of success for all students who enter your school. There are initiators and independent thinkers among you. Share your ideas; strategies and successes; encourage and support one another. Sustain the many programs that are underway to support your students

, and look for more ways to inspire them to achieve to their potential.

Continue to develop and expand strategies to weave reading, writing, math and critical thinking throughout all disciplines. The consistent teaching of these content and process areas will result in improved student learning and performance on the New Standards Reference Examination. Encourage and demand that your students realize their responsibility for their learning. Be firm concerning appropriate behavior within the classroom so that student learning is not disrupted by the actions of a few. Do not ignore bad behavior. Hold clear and high expectations for all students for both their academic performances and behavior. Learning is a powerful tool for life long success.

Students and parents want an active social role in school life. We laud your reactivation of the parent teacher organization and suggest that more student-focused and designed activities be planned. This student and parent involvement will enhance the learning of all students, as measured by your stated goals and guiding standards.

You have overcome great turmoil during these last few years. Your caring nature is palpable, and you are making strides in innovative teaching. Your diverse population is both a challenge and a joy. Use this report to reaffirm what is going well in your school and to unify your efforts and direct your school improvement activities. Continue your quest for excellence; your students deserve no less.

The Esek Hopkins Middle School Improvement Team

Henry Marciano, Teacher
Chairperson

Ellen Albanese, Teacher

Vernon Brown, Teacher

Jennifer Mignanelli, Teacher

Olwyn McCabe, Teacher

Ken Ayrassian, Teacher

Patricia Mallozzi, Teacher

Nancy Scolliard, Teacher

Ms. Polanco, Parent

Ms. Colon, Parent

The SALT Visit Team

Margaret M. Della Bitta
Science Teacher
South Kingstown High School
South Kingstown, Rhode Island
on leave to the Office of School Improvement and Accountability
Rhode Island Department of Education
as a Regents SALT Fellow
Visit Chair

Thomas A. Barbieri
Assistant Principal
Hugh B. Bain Middle School
Cranston, Rhode Island

Kathleen Connell
Physical Education and Health Teacher
Vincent J. Gallagher Middle School
Smithfield, Rhode Island

Joan Fagnoli
Principal
Nicholas A. Ferri Middle School
Johnston, Rhode Island

Dr. Norma Garnett
World Languages Teacher, Department Chair, Retired
Toll Gate High School
Warwick, Rhode Island

Bonnie Harris
ESL Writing Teacher
Joseph Jenks Junior High School
Pawtucket, Rhode Island

Melinda Ratcliffe
English Language Arts Teacher
Aldrich Junior High School
Warwick, Rhode Island

Katherine L. Reed
ESL Teacher
Edward Martin Middle School
East Providence, Rhode Island

Stephen Scappaticci
Science Teacher

Hugh B. Bain Middle School
Cranston, Rhode Island

Bonnie L. Ulm
English Language Arts Teacher
Exeter-West Greenwich Junior-Senior High School
West Greenwich, Rhode Island

Endorsement of SALT Visit Team Report

Esek Hopkins Middle School

December 6, 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 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: January 9, 2003

[\[LO1\]](#) Spell out MDT

[\[LO2\]](#) This seems awfully archaic. Margaret's response---I agree with your edits and accepted them all. Thanks.