



# Harry Kizirian Elementary 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 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.**

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# 1. THE PURPOSE AND LIMITS of this report

## Overview

This is the report of the SALT team that visited Harry Kizirian Elementary School from December 2, 2002 through December 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 Harry Kizirian Elementary 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 Harry Kizirian Elementary School.

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

◆ *observing a total of 110 complete classes and 68 partial classes. The team spent a total of over 130 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*

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

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

*teachers*

*school improvement team*

*school and district administrators*

*students*

*parents*

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

◆ *reviewing completed and ongoing student work*

◆ *discussing student work with teachers*

◆ *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*

*teachers' schedules*

*Providence One Plan for Harry Kizirian Elementary School*

*district strategic plan*

*1999-2000 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*

*Providence Teachers Contract*

*Providence District Strategic Plan*

*Student Parent Handbook for Harry Kizirian School*

The full visit team built the conclusions, commendations, and recommendations presented here through intense and thorough discussion. The team met for a total of 24 hours in six separate meetings spanning the five days of the visit. This time is exclusive of the time the team spent in classrooms, with teachers, and in meetings with students, parents, and school and district administrators.

The team must agree that every conclusion in this report:

is important enough to include in the report.

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

is set in the present.

contains the judgment of the team.

## Using the Report

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

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

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

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

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

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

## 2. PROFILE OF Harry Kizirian Elementary School

### Background

The Harry Kizirian Elementary School, formerly known as Camden Avenue School, was built in 1962 in the Smith Hill section of Providence, Rhode Island. This school educates 650 students in kindergarten through grade six. Though it is low income, the community surrounding Harry Kizirian School is rich in cultural diversity. Eighty-four percent of the students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. Ten percent of the students are white, 13% black, 23% Asian/Pacific Islander, and 53% Hispanic. Of the total school population, 243 students (39%) are identified as English Language Learners (ELLs) and receive English as a Second Language (ESL) services. Eight percent of the students receive special education services in a resource model, and six percent receive special education services in a self-contained class.

The administration, faculty and staff include a principal, an assistant principal, 30 classroom teachers, 14 specialists, 15 teacher-support staff, and two clerical staff.

In the past three years Kizirian Elementary School has experienced moderate growth in the areas of technology and professional development. Each classroom has 1-2 computers, and the library has a fully functional Internet-accessible computer lab. Many classroom teachers have completed training in the philosophy, features and instruction styles of the Balanced Literacy approach to teaching language arts.

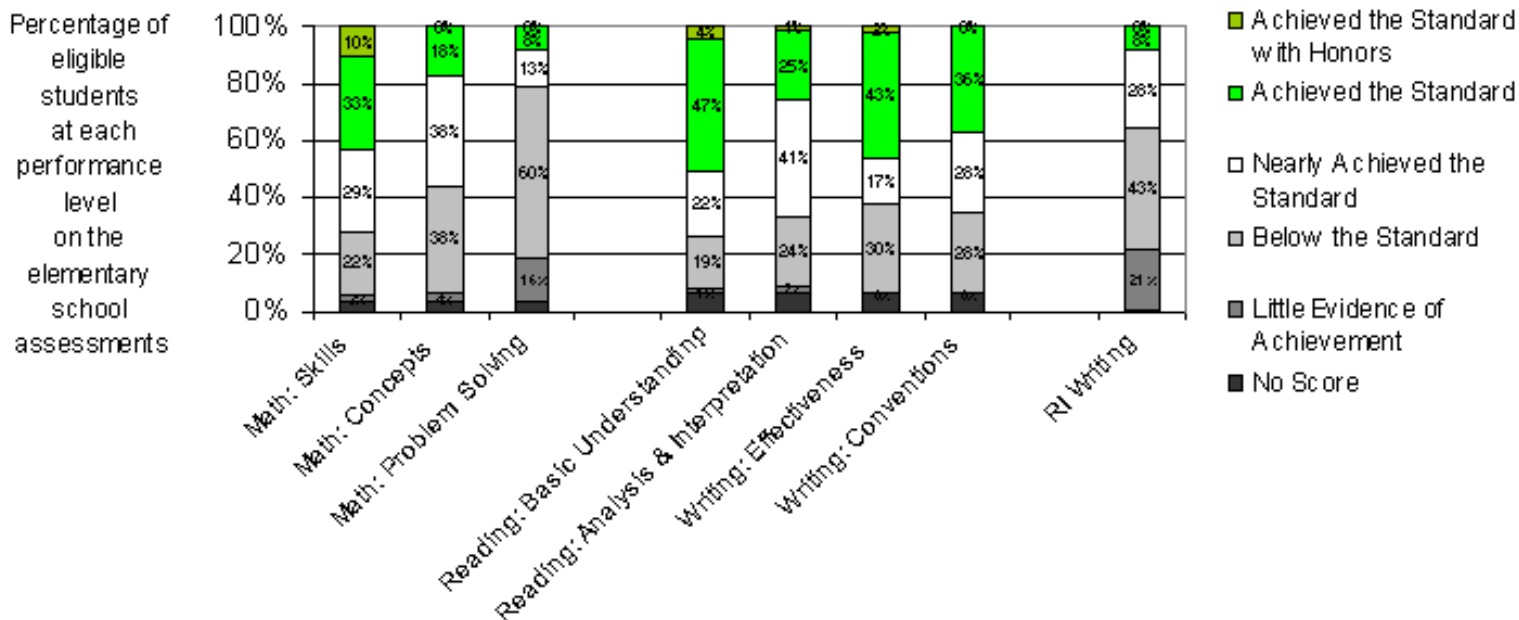
### State Assessment Results for Harry Kizirian Elementary School

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

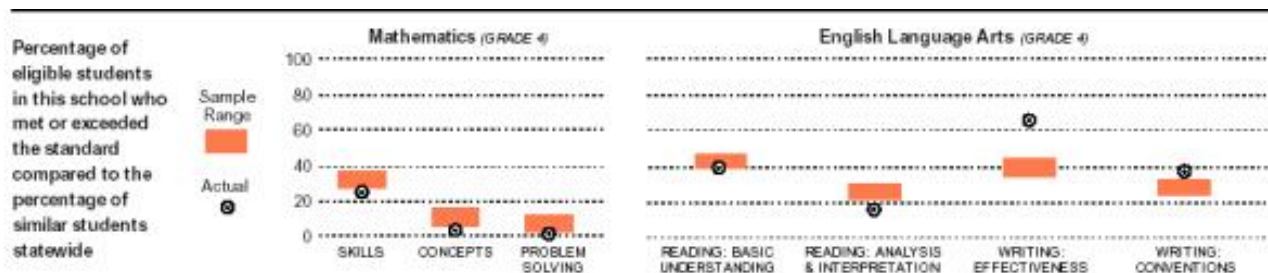
The first display shows how well the students do in relation to standards in English/Language Arts and mathematics. Student results are shown as the percentage of students taking the test whose score places them in the various categories at, above, or below the performance standard. Endorsed by the Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education in 1998, the tested standards can be found in the publication *New Standards Performance Standards*.

***Table1. 2001-02 Student Results on Rhode Island State Assessments***



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 Results compared to similar students in the state**



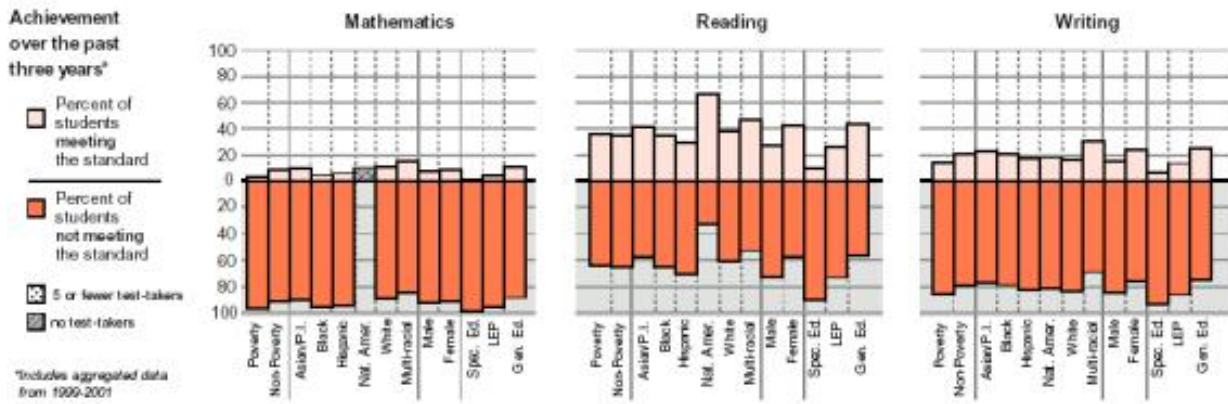
Harry Kizirian Elementary School scores are the same as similar students statewide in the mathematics subtests and Reading: basic understanding and Writing: conventions. Students scored below students statewide in Reading: analysis and interpretation and above students statewide in Writing Effectiveness.

**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**



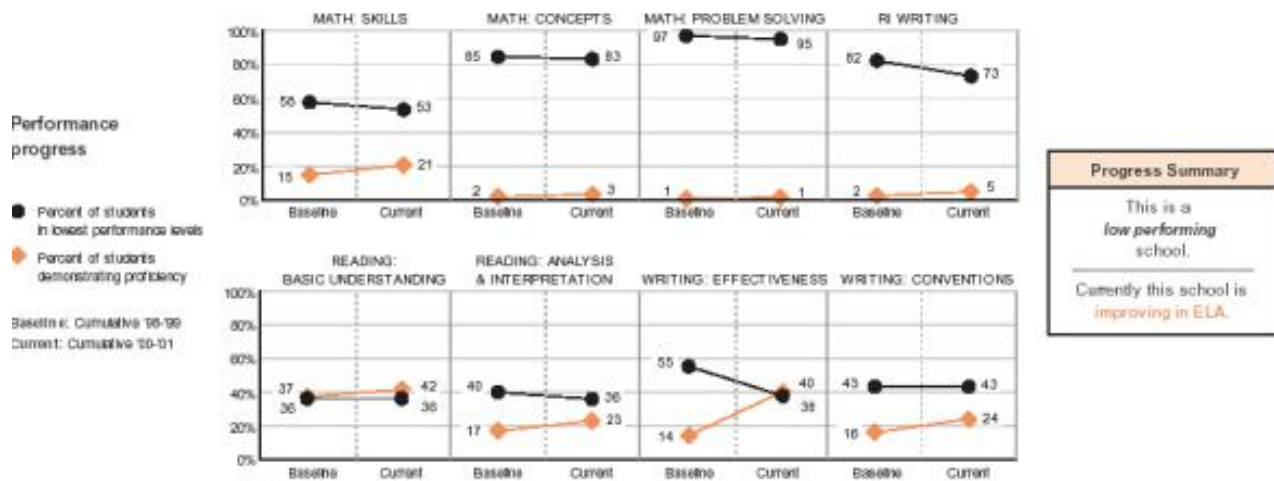


Equity gaps are evident in the Reading subtests for Hispanic, male, LEP and special education students. Equity gaps in writing exist for special education students.

### 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**



Although the Kizirian School was classified as low performing in FY 2001, it shows many positive signs of improvement, especially in the area of ELA. Scores at both the high and low proficient levels are improving in reading analysis and interpretation, writing effectiveness, and Rhode Island writing. Similar improvement was achieved in mathematics basic skills.

Information Works! data for Harry Kizirian Elementary School is available at <http://www.rido.net>

### 3. PORTRAIT OF Harry Kizirian Elementary School AT THE TIME OF THE VISIT

The ethnic and cultural diversity of staff and student population of Harry Kizirian Elementary School is celebrated. The bright and inviting lobby offers a suggestion box for parents and displays the hopes and expectations of the members of the student-elected Student School Improvement Team. Student work is displayed prominently throughout the school.

The district has made a commitment to allocate the necessary resources to this school to support improved student learning in literacy and numeracy. Supported by their coaches, teachers are at varying levels of implementation, commitment and understanding of these goals.

Students are eager to learn. They are developing confidence in themselves, as readers and writers. Clear expectations are established by the criteria that are set for tasks. Rubrics measure the completion of student work, but most do not provide opportunities for students to compare their work to a standard. While knowing the importance of literacy and numeracy, many students miss the opportunity to study science and to experience the hands-on learning it provides. They look forward to the challenge of more rigorous content and varied learning experiences.

Most teachers provide a supportive learning environment for their students. Teachers are challenged to implement new programs in literacy and numeracy. They struggle to provide meaningful independent activities for students, when they are focused on small group instruction. Some students waste valuable time when they are expected to engage in independent activities or classroom learning centers. Common planning time provides opportunities for grade level teachers to come together for professional development experiences.

The principal is working effectively to build a trusting and collegial environment. He talks with students and teachers about their work on a daily basis, and he celebrates their successes.

The Kizirian School is a large structure in need of basic maintenance and security updating. The temperature varies throughout the building. Safety and security are concerns among members of the Kizirian community.

## 4. FINDINGS ON STUDENT LEARNING

### Sources of Evidence

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

### Conclusions

Students at Harry Kizirian Elementary School like to write. They are confident of their understanding and use of the steps of the writing process. They know the importance of writing, view themselves as writers and excitedly share their writing. Students delve into literature and search their personal experiences for topics to write about. Many students write well at a basic level in a variety of genres, independently choose writing topics, and work comfortably at their own pace. However, only some student writing has substance and rich content, and only some captures the readers' interest. Students have mastered different competency levels in their use of writing conventions. (*following students, observing classes, 2002 New Standards English Language Arts Reference Examination School Summary, talking with students, teachers, staff, meeting with the school improvement team, students, school and district administrators, parents, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, discussing student work with teachers, 2002 Rhode Island Writing Assessment results*)

Students at the Kizirian School are becoming literate. They read often. Students read well when participating in teacher-directed guided reading lessons. Many effectively use a variety of decoding strategies to help them develop fluency. During independent reading time, students show a variety of reading habits. Some students are engrossed in reading; others are unable to, or choose not to, use this time successfully. The latter engage in a variety of off-task behaviors. The reading/writing connection is supported by the reading response journals. Although most students' oral and written responses to what they have read are on a concrete level, some students do communicate insightful ideas. In their journals many students effectively predict, reflect, react and summarize what they have read and build connections from that to their own lives. Continued meaningful and successful experiences in reading and writing will promote their continued growth. (*following students, 2002 New Standards English Language Arts Reference Examination School Summary, 2002 Information Works!, talking with students and teachers, discussing student work with teachers, observing classes, reviewing completed and*

*ongoing student work)*

Many students report that they enjoy mathematics. They are excited about math activities and are actively engaged in them. Students are at various levels of mathematical competency. Most primary grade students are competent in the use of manipulatives. While some intermediate students are able to use available resources effectively to justify and solve mathematical tasks, others are not. Students solve concrete problems, but they often are unable to justify their answers either orally or in writing. *(following students, , reviewing completed and ongoing student work, discussing student work with teachers, observing classes, observing the school outside of the classroom, talking with students, teachers, 2002 New Standards Mathematics Reference Examination School Summary)*

Students are eager to learn. They rely primarily on their peers for feedback and support. They appreciate their teachers, whom many consider as mentors. Students feel valued by the school administrators, teachers and support staff. Many students use criteria charts, rubrics, and other materials around their classrooms to improve and evaluate their work. Many students report frustration, when others interrupt their learning, when others engage in disrespectful behavior, and when the whole class breaks to use the bathrooms. Most students report that they feel safe during the school day. *(following students, observing classes, observing the school outside of the classroom, talking with students, teachers and staff, Student Parent Handbook, meeting with the students, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, reviewing classroom assessments)*

## Commendations for Harry Kizirian Elementary School

Ongoing effort and commitment of students to their learning

Appreciation of peers

## Recommendations for Harry Kizirian Elementary School

Continue professional development in teaching writing.

Review procedures for independent reading.

Continue to involve students in a variety of mathematical experiences.

Evaluate the interruptions to student learning.

## 5. FINDINGS ON TEACHING

### Sources of Evidence

- ◆ *observing classes*
- ◆ *observing the school outside of the classroom*
- ◆ *talking with students, teachers, and staff*
- ◆ *reviewing classroom assessments*
- ◆ *discussing student work with teachers*
- ◆ *classroom textbooks*
- ◆ *following students*
- ◆ *SALT Survey 1999-2000*
- ◆ *meeting with school improvement team, students, school and district administrators, parents*
- ◆ *reviewing records of professional development activities*
- ◆ *reviewing completed and ongoing student work*
- ◆ *2002 New Standards English Language Arts Reference Examination School Summary*

### Conclusions

Teachers are hard working and dedicated to improving student achievement. They are committed to the total child and create a positive, nurturing environment for all students. They are responding well to the required school reform efforts. Most teachers have embraced the balanced literacy initiative. They take advantage of the professional development opportunities provided. Teachers are at various levels of proficiency and comfort in the implementation of the many facets of balanced literacy. A new mathematics program, *Investigations*, has been introduced in the district. Kizirian teachers are making a concerted effort to focus on understanding and implementing this program in their classes. (*following students, observing the school outside of the classroom, talking with students, teachers, parents, observing classes, meeting with the school improvement team, students, school and district administrators, parents, reviewing records of professional development activities*)

Teachers are at various levels in their implementation and understanding of balanced literacy. All grade level teachers are involved in ongoing professional development with literacy coaches during common planning time. All teachers work with students in small group instruction. Most teachers use assessments to place students in groups in order to instruct them by using a variety of high-quality leveled texts, e.g. culturally and ethnically diverse award winning literature. A few teachers effectively incorporate flexible grouping during guided reading. While most teachers successfully engage students in small group or individual instruction, many struggle with the management and organization of those students, who are expected to work independently or in centers. This results in off-task student behavior and disruptions in the flow of instruction. (*observing classes, following students, meeting with the school improvement team, students, school and district administrators, parents, talking with teachers, classroom textbooks, reviewing records of professional development activities, reviewing classroom assessments*)

Teachers consistently use criteria charts, which they or their students have developed, to assess student work. Most student

work is assessed by the number of criteria students have met in their work, rather than on the quality of the work. The use of criteria clearly defines for students how they can successfully complete a task, but it does not adequately align the student product to the standard. Teachers often do not require students to give higher-level responses that invoke critical thinking. With more professional development and experience in balanced literacy, teachers will become more adept in the techniques of questioning that will elicit higher-level responses from students. This will enhance student comprehension, critical thinking, analysis and interpretation. (*following students, observing classes, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, discussing student work with teachers, observing the school outside of the classroom, reviewing classroom assessments, 2002 New Standards English Language Arts Reference Examination School Summary*)

## Commendations for Harry Kizirian Elementary School

Embracing school reform efforts

Effective use of common planning time

Use of the literacy and mathematics coaches

Quality, quantity, organization, and variety of literature to support Balanced Literacy

## Recommendations for Harry Kizirian Elementary School

Continue professional development in Balanced Literacy and *Investigations*.

Explore behavior management techniques to address student off-task behavior.

Develop rubrics that adequately align with the standard.

Continue to look at student work to create consistency and as a vehicle to drive instruction.

## Commendation for Providence School District

Quality, quantity, organization, and variety of literature to support Balanced Literacy

Professional development efforts that support total school reform

## 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 administrators*
- ◆ *meeting with the school improvement team, students, school and district administrators, parents*
- ◆ *Student Parent Handbook*
- ◆ *following students*
- ◆ *Providence One Plan for Harry Kizirian Elementary School*
- ◆ *1999-2000 SALT Survey report*
- ◆ *reviewing district strategic plan*
- ◆ *reviewing district and school policies and practices*
- ◆ *reviewing records of professional development activities*
- ◆ *Providence Teachers Contract*
- ◆ *reviewing completed and ongoing student work*
- ◆ *teachers' schedules*

### Conclusions

Students are well supervised during the school day (8:55 a.m. until 2:45 p.m.). However, the playground and school grounds are not supervised prior to 8:55 a.m. Students enter the school between 8:30-8:55 a.m. to eat breakfast. Adults are present at this time. Some students, those who have completed breakfast and those arriving at school prior to 8:55 a.m., roam the grounds, the lower level of the building, and the neighborhood without supervision. While the Student/Parent Handbook states that parents must call the school office the morning their student is absent, the school does not follow up on unreported absences on the same day as the absence. Students are required to bring a note when they return to school. Students can access hazards both inside the school and outside on the school ground. The broken moveable wall in the gym/lunchroom is unsafe. Students participating in Physical Education class are sharing the open area with those who are eating lunch. This limits physical education activities and equity for students in the physical education program. The abandoned locker rooms that adjoin the gym/cafeteria are accessible to students. Due to lack of outdoor security, cars in the school parking lot repeatedly have been vandalized or stolen. The front door is unlocked during the school day, allowing free access to the building. These factors create an unsafe environment for students, teachers and staff. The potential for a dangerous situation to occur is alarming. (*observing the school outside of the classroom, meeting with students, school administrators, parents, talking with teachers, staff school administrators, and students, Student Parent Handbook, reviewing district and school policies and practices, Providence Teachers Contract*)

The Kizirian School is to be applauded for scheduling time for most teachers to plan together. A one-hour weekly common planning is provided for classroom teachers to work with coaches and usually with their grade level colleagues. This provides teachers with necessary embedded professional development in standards-based programs and an opportunity to look at and

share student work to drive standards-based instruction. This also fosters teacher collegiality and boosts morale. Unfortunately specialists are not provided with or included in common planning time. This is not equitable. Their inability to participate in all professional development inhibits interdisciplinary integration. This does not encourage or provide specialists with opportunities to align their curriculum with educational reform. (*observing classes, talking with teachers, following students, reviewing district and school policies and practices, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, reviewing records of professional development activities, teachers schedules, meeting with the school improvement team, school and district administrators*)

Parents trust the school to educate and support their children. They feel that the teachers work hard and provide a good education for their children. The administration is supportive of parents. Parents hope for more participation in creating a community that supports the holistic development of their children and that provides them with strategies and resources to counteract the social pressures that exist in their children's lives out of the school community. While happy with the present after-school programs, parents reported the need for more before and after school activities. The Providence One Plan (POP) for Kizirian has not addressed this community need. There is no evidence that parents or members of the community have participated in writing this document or have served on the School Improvement Team. The Providence One Plan is a working document for this school. Timelines and responsible parties often are not included in the plan. This results in vagueness and lack of accountability. (*meeting with the school improvement team, parents, reviewing Providence One Plan, observing classes, 1999-2000 SALT Survey report*)

There is no district curriculum for science or social studies. Some teachers attempt to integrate these disciplines through balanced literacy. Parents and students alike report that science and social studies are lacking from the education provided at this school. This limits the students' general knowledge and appreciation of the world around them and does not provide the inquiry-based experiences that are important for student learning. This is a significant gap in the students' education. Similarly, there is minimal use of information technology. Although there are networked computers in every classroom, these are underutilized. The lack of technical support, software and training limits the use of this existing technology. Lack of library automation gives students and teachers no independent access to information. (*following students, observing classes, talking with students and teachers, meeting with the students, district administrators, and parents, reviewing district and school policies and practices, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, district strategic plan*)

## Commendations for Harry Kizirian Elementary School

Utilization of common planning time

Integration by specialists of literacy in their programs without the advantage of common planning time

## Recommendations for Harry Kizirian Elementary School

Develop a comprehensive plan to address unreported absences on a daily basis.

Develop a before school supervision plan to ensure student safety.

Fix broken movable wall in gym/lunchroom, secure locker room doors and repair other building hazards.

Implement the appropriate security measures both inside and outside the school, including locking the front door at all times.

Include specialists regularly in common planning.

Carefully analyze and reevaluate the present school improvement plan in response to 2002 SALT Survey Data in relation to parent concerns and needs.

In lieu of a formal science and social studies curriculum, continue your efforts to incorporate science and social studies in your balanced literacy curriculum.

Develop uniformity in the use of standards-based rubrics.

Work with community leaders to address parental concerns.

## Recommendations for Providence School Department

Develop a curriculum for science and social studies.



Provide professional development, technical support and hardware and software for teachers to support their use of information technology.

Continue to provide and support high levels of professional support in literacy and numeracy.

## 7. Final Advice to the School

Celebrate your significant successes. You have been given the responsibility to implement new programs. Your students are already showing the benefit of your hard work and dedication. Continually deepen and develop your practice, as you introduce new programs.

Be an advocate for the safety of your students. Investigate school security for both students and staff. Encourage more people to participate in the school improvement process. Make efforts to include parents in your learning community. Explore the possibilities of diverse programming partnerships for out-of-school times.

Work to provide more varied learning experiences for your students when they are involved in independent learning

Through common planning time, you have begun to work together. As you have embraced change, trust one another. Unlock and open your classroom doors. Share the wealth of your combined knowledge.

## The Harry Kizirian Elementary School Improvement Team

Dr. Guy D. Alba  
Principal

Michael Allard  
Teacher Assistant

Alan Audette  
Grade 2 Teacher

Lucille Burke  
Guidance

Claudia Gizzarelli  
Assistant Principal

Theresa Kelly  
Grade 4-5 Special Needs

Yeu Kue  
Grade 1 ESL

Patricia Maymon  
Physical Education and Health Teacher

Maureen Monterio  
Literacy Coach

Karen O'Callahan  
Literacy Coach

Yaozhu Pan  
Grade K ESL

## The SALT Visit Team

Donna H. Reinalda,  
Chair  
On leave to RIDE as a SALT Fellow  
Multi-age Classroom Teacher  
Sowams School, Barrington

Patricia Iafrate Bellini, M.S. CCC/SLP  
Speech/Language Pathologist  
Alan Shawn Feinstein Elementary School  
Central Falls

Paula DeCastro  
Special Education Resource Teacher  
Emma G. Whiteknact Elementary School  
East Providence

Lorraine L. Fusco  
Special Education Resource Teacher  
Flora S. Curtis Elementary School  
Pawtucket

Amy Marvel  
Grade 2 Teacher  
Governor Aram J. Pothier Elementary School  
Woonsocket

Barbara A. Mooradian  
Grade 4 Teacher  
Veterans Memorial Elementary School  
Central Falls

Donna M. Peluso  
Principal  
John F. Horgan Elementary School  
West Warwick

Keith Remillard  
Music Specialist  
Fallon Memorial School  
Pawtucket

Leigh Riesenfeld  
Library Media Specialist  
Chester W. Barrows School  
Cranston

Nicole Boothman-Shepard  
Parent  
Warwick

## Endorsement of SALT Visit Team Report

### Harry Kizirian Elementary 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, 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 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.



**CATALPA LTD.**

Thomas A. Wilson, EdD

Catalpa Ltd.

DATE: January 9, 2003