



# Kevin K. Coleman Elementary School

Woonsocket

## The SALT Visit Team Report

March 7, 2003



**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@ride.net.**

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# 1. THE PURPOSE AND LIMITS of this report

## Overview

This is the report of the SALT team that visited Kevin K. Coleman Elementary School from March 3 through March 7, 2003. 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 follows. 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 Kevin K. Coleman 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 Kevin K. Coleman Elementary School.

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

- ◆ *observing a total of 85 complete classes and 68 partial classes. The team spent a total of over 120 hours in direct classroom observation. Every classroom was visited at least once, and almost every teacher was observed more than once.*
- ◆ *observing the school outside of the classroom*
- ◆ *following eight students for a full day*
- ◆ *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*
  - school improvement plan for Kevin K. Coleman Elementary School*
  - Mission Statement for Kevin K. Coleman Elementary School*
  - district strategic plan*
  - self study documents*
  - Woonsocket Teacher Evaluation document*
  - Woonsocket Teachers Contract*
  - Learning Walk follow up letters*
  - 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 27 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 Kevin K. Coleman Elementary School

### Background

Kevin K. Coleman Elementary School is located in the western section of Woonsocket, Rhode Island, which is known as Fairmount. Originally built in 1963 as a parochial elementary school, it was purchased by the city of Woonsocket in 1977. The following September, the facility opened as Fairmount Elementary School. On September 30, 1981 the building was renamed Kevin K. Coleman Elementary School in honor of a highly respected former Woonsocket mayor. The building now houses approximately 300 students in grades three, four and five.

Children from the Fairmount Community in Woonsocket attend kindergarten through grade two at the Fifth Avenue and Second Avenue schools.

Coleman School contains thirteen classrooms with various classroom models, which include four traditional grade 3 classrooms, two grade 4 classrooms that are team-taught, three traditional grade 5 classrooms, one inclusion grade 4-5 classroom, and one self-contained intermediate special education class. Of the students attending Coleman, 32% are white, 42% are Hispanic, 16% are black and 10% are Asian/Pacific Islander. Approximately 17% of the students receive ESL services, and 19% receive special education services. Ninety-one percent of the students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch.

There are 12 grade level teachers, a special education inclusion teacher, an intermediate self-contained teacher, 1.5 special education resource teachers, and two ESL teachers. A full-time literacy coach assists in the implement of the balanced literacy program. A REA Bridge Grant provides training for the third grade staff in the use of DRA's, a reading assessment tool. As a Title I school, three reading teachers, a full-time counselor and a computer technology teacher provide support for the students. The counselor provides one-on-one counseling, as well as a year long, classroom-counseling program based on a Character Education Curriculum.

A Model Initiative Grant has equipped four classrooms with additional technological equipment, including a mobile laptop lab used by the grade 4 teams.

A Twenty-First Century Grant supports an after school program and Title 1, a 5-week Summer School Academy. In collaboration with the Connecting With Children and Family area COZY site, students also participate in a number of after school enrichment classes at the Chaplin-Perez Center. Coleman is the site of a school-based health center. The Thundermist Health Clinic, located in the school nurse's office, offers a variety of services for all students who attend the three elementary schools in the Fairmount Neighborhood.

Coleman is in the second year of its involvement with The University of Pittsburgh's Institute for Learning. Coleman has focused on two of the Institutes' principles of learning: clear expectations and accountable talk. Coleman teachers conduct Monthly Learning Walks to examine student learning and help connect their professional development activities to the learning needs of their students.

A school/business partnership with Brooks Pharmacy awards scholarships to a number of former Coleman students. The Woonsocket Shelter, Hasbro Children's Hospital and area nursing homes are among the benefactors of the students' good deeds.

### State Assessment Results for Kevin K. Coleman Elementary School

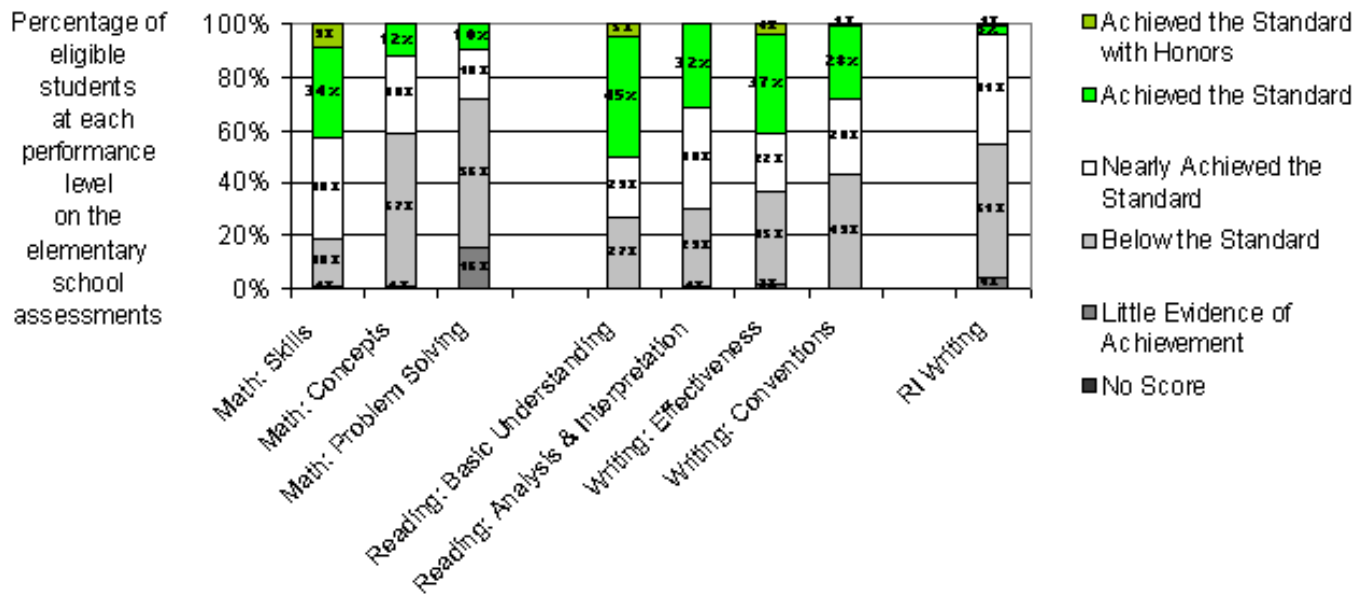
This section of the school profile shows results from the latest available state assessment program four different ways: against performance standards; compared to similar students in the state; across student groups within the school; and over time. Assessment results create pieces of evidence that 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*.



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

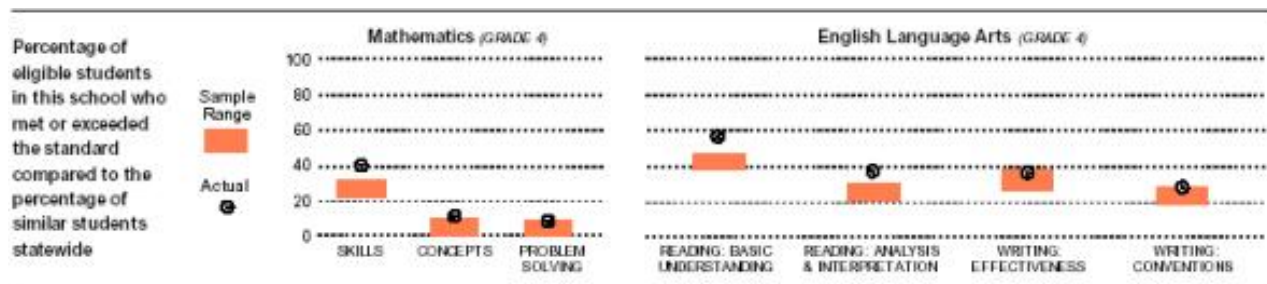


Only in the area of Reading: Basic Understanding do 50 % of the students meet the standard. Performance in RI writing is poor. On the 2002 New Standards Reference Examination, students at Coleman Elementary School perform better in reading and writing than they do in mathematics.

**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**

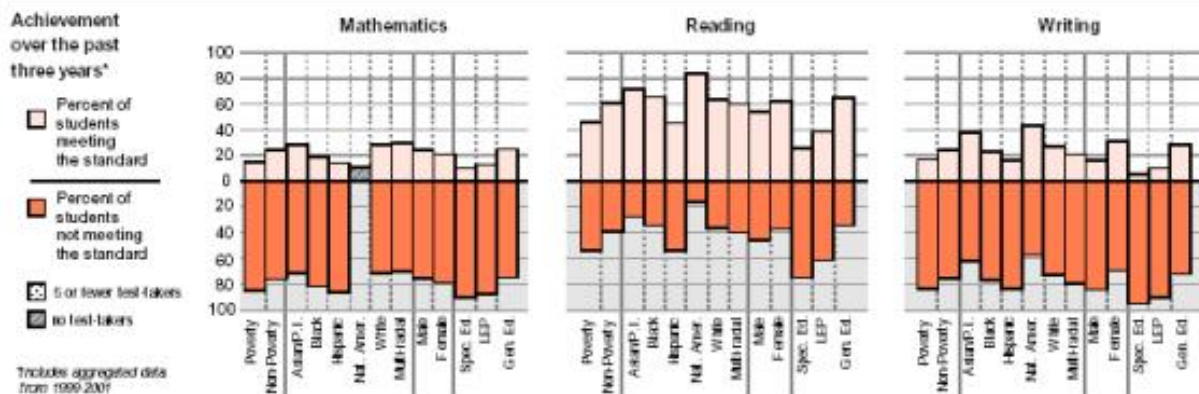


In reading basic understanding, reading analysis and interpretation, and in mathematics basic skills Coleman’s students perform better than similar students statewide. They are at the same level on all other tests.

**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**



There are gaps in the performance of Hispanic and special education students in mathematics, reading, and writing. Gaps exist for students in poverty and LEP students in reading and writing. In writing there are additional gaps for blacks and males.

**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. 2002 Student Results Showing Change Over Time**

The Kevin Coleman School has been categorized as a low performing, not improving school on the basis of its assessment results from 1998 to 2002. The following tables show if the school improved or not in each area that defines improvement (Yes denotes improvement and No denotes no improvement.)

<b>Mathematics: Skills</b>		<b>Mathematics: Concepts</b>		<b>Mathematics: Problem Solving</b>	
<i>Increase in Percent Proficient</i>	<i>Decrease in Percent in Lowest Performance Levels</i>	<i>Increase in Percent Proficient</i>	<i>Decrease in Percent in Lowest Performance Levels</i>	<i>Increase in Percent Proficient</i>	<i>Decrease in Percent in Lowest Performance Levels</i>
<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b>

<b>Reading: Basic Understanding</b>		<b>Reading: Analysis and Interpretation</b>	
<i>Increase in Percent Proficient</i>	<i>Decrease in Percent in Lowest Performance Levels</i>	<i>Increase in Percent Proficient</i>	<i>Decrease in Percent in Lowest Performance Levels</i>
<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>

<b>Writing: Effectiveness</b>		<b>Writing: Conventions</b>		<b>Rhode Island Writing</b>	
<i>Increase in Percent Proficient</i>	<i>Decrease in Percent in Lowest Performance Levels</i>	<i>Increase in Percent Proficient</i>	<i>Decrease in Percent in Lowest Performance Levels</i>	<i>Increase in Percent Proficient</i>	<i>Decrease in Percent in Lowest Performance Levels</i>
<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>

There has been a decrease in the percentage of students in the lowest performance levels in mathematical concepts and problem solving. In all other subtests there is neither a decrease in the lowest levels nor an increase in the percent of students proficient. Overall performance is static.

Information Works! data for Kevin K. Coleman Elementary School is available at <http://www.rido.net>.

### 3. PORTRAIT OF Kevin K. Coleman Elementary School AT THE TIME OF THE VISIT

Coleman Elementary School is in an urban setting, which has a culturally and academically diverse student population. Students are welcomed, safe, secure, and respected by all school staff. These eager learners, who value their education and understand the importance of learning, are Coleman's greatest assets.

Admirably, Coleman's teachers and staff show genuine concern for their students' welfare. They understand how poverty affects their students' willingness, interest and ability to learn; this often overshadows what they expect of student academic performance. Students desire and need more challenge. While some teachers eagerly look for ways to change their practice, others cling to traditional teaching practices. Differences exist in the quality of instruction children receive in and between grades. Because curricula subjects are not integrated and instruction is whole-class and teacher-directed, students are not encouraged to make connections between subjects. Students have little voice or involvement in their learning. Additionally, teachers are not held accountable for what they teach, and their instructional practices create inequitable learning opportunities for students.

The Coleman community respects the principal, who is approachable and supportive. All members work together to provide the best for the students. A wide range of after school programs and a variety of community supports are in place to assist the total Fairmont Community.

## 4. FINDINGS ON STUDENT LEARNING

### Sources of Evidence

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

### Conclusions

The students at Coleman Elementary School feel safe, value their education, and love their school. They respect their teachers and are very polite to all. While students are enthusiastic and eager, they are ready for challenge in all facets of their learning. They compliantly follow their teachers' directions in completing their assignments. After completing their work, some students read books, while others passively wait for the next direction or for the remainder of the group to finish. Unfortunately, the latter limits students' opportunities to reach their academic potential and to become effective, independent, and self-directed learners. In contrast, when students are engaged in inquiry-based learning activities and verbal interactions, they become animated and active learners. (*following students, observing classes, meeting with the students, school and district administrators, parents, talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrator*)

Students are aware of the terms standards, criteria, and rubrics, but they are confused about their purpose and use. A few students use criteria as a guide to the steps they need to follow to complete their work. They view rubrics as the basis for how teachers grade their work, rather than as a way to help them improve their work. Most students strive to meet the standard, which is a rubric score of 3, but they view a rubric score of 4 as unattainable. This curtails their motivation to excel. Because students do not understand how to use standards, criteria and rubrics correctly, and because they use these tools inappropriately, they do not perform as well as they could. (*observing classes, following students, talking with students, teachers, discussing student work with teachers, meeting with students, parents, reviewing completed and ongoing student work*)

While they enjoy silent reading, most students are not actively engaged in oral reading. Their oral reading lacks purpose, and what they read often is inappropriate for their reading levels. Because most students do not read fluently, their oral reading sounds robotic. Students rely on decoding words as their primary reading strategy. Most students are bored. They are not challenged by classroom reading instruction. Students and teachers do not engage in much dialogue about literature. Most students respond accurately to basic recall questions, but they have only a limited knowledge of how to analyze, interpret and

make connections within a text. Although they perform better than similar students statewide, these students are capable of even higher levels achievement in reading. (*following students, observing classes, classroom textbooks, 2002 New Standards English Language Arts Reference Examination School Summary, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, 2002 Information Works!*)

The quality of most student writing is poor. While some student writing has organization, their development of ideas, word choice and voice are poor. Many students write in a writer's notebook. They do not connect or use the bank of ideas in these notebooks to develop their written pieces. Students primarily write about teacher-selected topics. Because students do not write for any purpose, they are disengaged from what they write and do not feel any ownership of it. Students' written responses in content areas require literal recall of facts presented mostly in a worksheet format. This is evident by their low scores on both the 2002 New Standards English Language Arts Reference Examination and Rhode Island Writing Assessment. (*following students, meeting with school improvement team, students, school and district administrators, observing classes, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, 2002 New Standards English Language Arts Reference Examination School Summary, 2002 Rhode Island Writing Assessment results, 2002 Information Works!*)

Students have strong mathematical skills, however their ability to apply these skills to mathematical concepts is limited. They do not understand math concepts well enough to apply them to solving problems that require higher-level thinking. Student performance on the skills subtest of the 2002 New Standards Mathematics Reference Examination supports this fact. Some students say math is easy. Yet, many struggle to understand a concept, even after repeated practice. On simplistic word problems many students successfully determine which operation to use to arrive at the correct answer. These word problems do not provide them with opportunities to determine what effective problem solving strategies are necessary to solve real-life applications or to communicate their mathematical thinking. (*following students, talking with students, teachers, staff, 2002 New Standards Mathematics Reference Examination School Summary, 2002 Information Works!, discussing student work with teachers, meeting with the school improvement team, students, district administrators, observing classes, 2002 Salt Survey report*)

## Commendations for Kevin K. Coleman Elementary School

Engagement of students in *Books and Beyond* Program

Students' enthusiasm for learning

High level of student respect for all in the learning community

## Recommendations for Kevin K. Coleman Elementary School

Give students a voice and choice in their learning.

Actively involve students in their learning.

Instruct students in the purpose of standards, criteria and rubrics and how to use them effectively to improve the quality of their work.

Provide students with more challenges in all areas of their learning.

Connect student learning to real life experiences.

Provide opportunities for students to solve higher order problems and to justify their solutions both orally and in writing.

Celebrate student successes.

## 5. FINDINGS ON TEACHING

### Sources of Evidence

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

### Conclusions

Coleman teachers and staff show genuine concern and caring for the welfare of their students. Students display appropriate school behavior and teachers manage structured classrooms. Teachers do not take full advantage of this optimal classroom climate to challenge, engage and empower students to reach their maximum potential. The overriding belief among staff is that there are external factors that limit their students' abilities, and this negatively impacts what they expect of students. (*following students, observing classes, observing the school outside of the classroom, talking with students, teachers, and staff, meeting with the school improvement team, students, school and district administrators, parents*)

Teachers' understanding of standards-based teaching and learning is emerging. They view a standard as the expected outcome, but they are not clear about the necessary steps they must take to guide their students to reach the standard. Standards, criteria, rubrics, and anchor papers are posted in all classrooms, and teachers make their students aware of their existence; however, application of these tools in daily practice is blurred. Because subjects are taught in isolation from one another, delivery of content is fragmented and there is a lack of cross curricula integration. Instruction is textbook-driven, rather than standard driven. There is confusion about the design and use of criteria and rubrics. Posted criteria give guidelines for how students should complete the components of their assignments. Teachers use rubrics solely to grade student assignments and not to guide their instruction or to provide students with the necessary feedback to assess or to improve the quality of their work.

Because teachers are confused about how effectively to use these tools, students are also confused about how to use them. *(following students, talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrator, meeting with the school improvement team, students, school and district administrators, parents, observing classes, classroom textbooks, 2002 Salt Survey report, reviewing classroom assessment, discussing student work with teachers, reviewing completed and ongoing student work)*

Two distinct methods of reading instruction exist within Coleman Elementary School: whole-group and balanced literacy. The latter is just beginning to emerge. Many teachers rely on traditional large-group instruction, which consists of presenting the same reading material to all students. Students become disengaged, when they are predictably asked to take turns reading aloud. Teachers measure student comprehension by asking students questions that require literal recall or the completion of an abundance of low-level worksheets. All teachers assess student reading by using end-of-unit tests. This assessment may provide a starting point for instruction, but it does not provide a continuing record of student progress. While all teachers have received some professional development in balanced literacy, only a few have participated in embedded professional development. Student engagement is more prevalent when teachers work with small groups of students using leveled texts. This is a beginning step toward practicing balanced literacy. With expansion of balanced literacy, the learning needs of individual student and the various levels at which they read will be addressed and student performance will increase. *(2002 Salt Survey report, 2002 Information Works!, talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrator, following students, observing classes, classroom textbooks, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, meeting with the school improvement team, students, school and district administrators, reviewing records of professional development activities)*

Writing is taught in isolation. It is not integrated into the content areas. Teachers primarily focus their instruction on writing skills: spelling, conventions and grammar. An over reliance on the teacher corrections of skills, limits the time they need to teach students how to develop the content: ideas, voice, word choice, sentence fluency, and organization of what they write. Although teachers are aware of the steps of the writing process, there are significant gaps in how they instruct students to use these steps when they write. Teachers limit student ownership of what they write by prescribing the topics they write about. While some teachers encourage students to peer and self-edit, most teachers edit the writing students produce. Revision is alarmingly absent in the process. Students lack opportunities to share their writing or to celebrate it. "A writing portfolio" is merely a collection of a student's work, rather than a record that will demonstrate a student's growth in writing. Although students produce written products, the gaps in how writing is taught hinder the development of students as competent writers. *(following students, observing classes, talking with students, teachers, and staff, discussing student work with teachers, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, reviewing classroom assessment, 2002 New Standards English Language Arts Reference Examination School Summary, 2002 Rhode Island Writing Assessment results, 2002 Information Works!)*

Math instruction is largely textbook driven, so instruction is uniform for all students. Teachers primarily emphasize mathematical skills by requiring repetitive practice. The improved performance on the skills subtest on the 2002 New Standards Mathematics Reference Examination School Summary demonstrates this. However, the lack of varying instructional practices and tools limits student understanding of mathematical concepts and their ability to apply math skills and concepts to solving problems. The misperception that word problems in the textbook address the standard for problem solving further inhibits students' opportunity to practice higher order problem solving. This, coupled with the fact that students lack the ability to justify their solutions to math problems, both orally and in writing, explains their low performance on the 2002 New Standards Mathematics Reference Examination: concepts and problem solving. *(2002 New Standards Mathematics Reference Examination School Summary, 2002 Information Works! following students, observing classes, meeting with students, classroom textbooks, talking with students and teachers, reviewing classroom assessment, discussing student work with teachers)*

## Commendations for Kevin K. Coleman Elementary School

Teachers' genuine concern about the welfare of their students

Beginning efforts in standards based instruction

## Recommendations for Kevin K. Coleman Elementary School

See that all teachers have a common knowledge of standards, criteria and rubrics and how to use these consistently within the classroom.

Use *New Standards Mathematical Performance* tasks to teach students how to solve higher order problems. Be sure to require them to justify their solutions in writing.

Vary instructional practices and tools in mathematics to meet the instruction needs of individual students.



Capitalize on your students' motivation and interest in learning to maximize their potential.

Actively engage in balanced literacy training through professional development activities, and implement it in your classrooms.

Differentiate instruction to meet the needs of all students.

Involve students in a variety of meaningful activities beyond low-level worksheets.

Evaluate and implement a consistent school-wide writing program.

Use student portfolios to demonstrate student growth over time and to improve and showcase student learning, rather than just as a collection of student work.

#### Commendation for Woonsocket School Department:

Providing a literacy trainer for Coleman to support balanced literacy

#### Recommendations for Woonsocket School Department

Provide interactive professional development for teachers in standards-based practices.

Require extended professional development for all teachers in balanced literacy.

## 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*
- ◆ *2002 Information Works!*
- ◆ *meeting with the school improvement team, students, school and district administrators, parents*
- ◆ *following students*
- ◆ *reviewing School Improvement Plan for Kevin K. Coleman Elementary School*
- ◆ *Woonsocket Teacher Evaluation document*
- ◆ *Woonsocket Teachers Contract*
- ◆ *reviewing district and school policies and practices*
- ◆ *self sStudy documents*
- ◆ *Learning Walk follow up letters*
- ◆ *2002 Salt Survey report*
- ◆ *Mission Statement for Kevin K. Coleman Elementary School*
- ◆ *reviewing classroom assessment*

### Conclusions

The teacher evaluation for tenured teachers is a goal-setting model to foster ongoing professional development to improve the quality of teaching and learning. A checklist model is used to evaluate the competency of non-tenured teachers. In theory, this process has the potential to promote school initiative. At present, the teacher evaluation at Coleman does not hold individuals accountable for their day-to-day practice. It does not support the stated purposes of the evaluation, as defined by the Woonsocket School Department. (*meeting with school and district administrators, talking with teachers and school administrator, reviewing district and school policies and practices, Woonsocket Teacher Evaluation Document, Woonsocket Teachers Contract*)

Coleman is fortunate to have a variety of personnel to support classroom instruction. Often three or more teachers are assigned to individual classrooms for part of the language arts block. Some instances of simultaneous teaching of small groups or individuals are evident. This reduces the teacher/student ratio and makes it possible to meet the diverse learning needs of all students. Too often, when there are several teachers in a classroom, some teachers passively observe others as they instruct the whole group. This does not take advantage of the professional expertise available; therefore, students are being deprived of small group learning opportunities. (*observing classes, meeting with the school improvement team, school and district administrators, talking with teachers and staff, following students*)

In the self-study conducted by the School Improvement Team, there is little correlation between the observed classroom practice and the results collected. The Learning Walk letters identify recommendations for improvement, yet there is little follow-up on these recommendations. The school improvement plan does not set clear timelines. Evaluation of the action steps, as defined in that plan, will not measure progress. *(self study documents, meeting with the school improvement team, reviewing school improvement plan, Learning Walk follow up letters)*

Fairmount Community and Coleman School mutually support each other. Parents report that the school does a good job of educating their children. There are many community services and partnerships that support students' academic, physical, social and emotional needs. Before and after school activities are available through the school, the community and the neighborhood COZY. Located within the school premises, Thundermist Health Clinic supports the physical well being of students and their families. All of these factors contribute to a sense that this unified school community has the interest of its students at heart. *(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 administrator, 2002 Salt Survey report, reviewing school improvement plan, 2002 Information Works!)*

The Coleman School mission statement states that Coleman will "provide a framework for student success." Many of the strategies used to evaluate action steps in the school improvement plan rely on observation and evaluation of classroom practices. These observations are not occurring. This severely affects the accountability of the school to change and monitor student learning and teaching. As the instructional leader, the principal is the one who is challenged to move this school forward by holding all parties responsible. *(Coleman Mission Statement, reviewing school improvement plan, following students, reviewing classroom assessment, talking with students, teachers, and school administrator, reviewing district and school policies and practices, meeting with the school improvement team)*

## Commendations for Kevin K. Coleman Elementary School

Community services and partnerships that support the academic, physical and social/emotional needs of Coleman students.

## Recommendations for Kevin K. Coleman Elementary School

Hold all members of the school accountable for student learning and teaching.

Implement teacher evaluation, as defined by the Woonsocket School Department, to support accountability.

Effectively utilize the expertise of all classroom personnel to provide optimal learning experiences for students.

Revise the school improvement plan to incorporate recommendations from the SALT Visit report.

Establish a means to visually celebrate student work and to recognize student accomplishments both within the school and the local community.

## Commendation for Fairmount Community

Accessibility of the Thundermist Health Clinic that services the Fairmount School Community

## Commendation for the Woonsocket School Department

Variety of personnel for classroom instructional support

## Recommendations for Woonsocket School Department

Ensure implementation of the teacher evaluation.

Review effectiveness of current teacher evaluation.

## 7. Final Advice to the School

Step back, and look at how much you have accomplished. Start right now to become agents of change. Everything is in place. Don't put off until next year what you can start this year.

Use the expertise that you have available within your school. Take advantage of the embedded professional development. Visit each other's classrooms, and share your practice.

Ensure a system that holds all members of the learning community accountable for high levels of performance for all students.

Make your mission statement a reality. It clearly states your desire to bring high levels of education to your students. Your students are great. Celebrate them. Motivate them. Challenge them.

All members of this SALT visit team hope that you will use this report to continue your professional growth and to improve learning for all your students.

## The Kevin K. Coleman Elementary School Improvement Team

Peg Bierden, Librarian

Diane Brown  
Grade 5 Teacher

Terry Curtin  
Executive Director  
Connecting for Children and Families

Trish Degan  
Computer Teacher

Renee DiCenso  
School Nurse

Terri Eason  
Parent

Linda Limoges  
Literacy Coach

Chris McClure  
School Counselor

George Nasuti  
Principal

Lisa Tenreiro  
Grade 4 Teacher

Jen Rogers  
Special Education Teacher

## The SALT Visit Team

Donna H. Reinalda  
Chair

On leave to the Rhode Island Department of Education  
Sowams School  
Barrington, Rhode Island

Doreen Brinson  
Grade 3 Teacher  
Chester W. Barrows School  
Cranston, Rhode Island

Paul Carpentier  
K-5 Arts Educator  
Daniel D. Waterman School  
Cranston, Rhode Island

Tracy L. Lafreniere  
Literacy Coach/Reading Recovery  
North Smithfield Elementary School  
North Smithfield, Rhode Island

Bethany Marchetti  
Grade 5 Teacher  
Anna M. McCabe School  
Smithfield, Rhode Island

Maribeth Plourde  
Grade 2/3 Teacher  
Sowams School  
Barrington, Rhode Island

Dr. Karl Smith  
Principal  
Vincent J. Gallagher Middle School  
Smithfield, Rhode Island

Sonya Whipp  
Numeracy Coach  
Bristol-Warren Schools  
Rhode Island

## Endorsement of SALT Visit Team Report

**Kevin K. Coleman Elementary School**

March 7, 2003 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 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: April 2, 2003