



Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
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Davisville Middle School

NORTH KINGSTOWN

THE SALT VISIT TEAM REPORT

December 5, 2003



School Accountability for Learning and Teaching (SALT)

The school accountability program of the Rhode Island Department of Education

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Purpose and Limits of This Report

This is the report of the SALT team that visited Davisville Middle School from December 1 to December 5, 2003.

The SALT visit report makes every effort to provide your school with a valid, specific picture of how well your students are learning. The report also portrays how the teaching in your school affects learning, and how the school supports learning and teaching. The purpose of developing this information is to help you make changes in teaching and the school that will improve the learning of your students. The report is valid because the team's inquiry is governed by a protocol that is carefully designed to make it possible for visit team members to make careful judgments using accurate evidence. The careful exercise of professional judgment makes the findings useful for school improvement because these judgments identify where the visit team thinks the school is doing well, and where it is doing less well.

The major questions the team addressed were:

How well do students learn at Davisville Middle School?

How well does the teaching at Davisville Middle School affect learning?

How well does Davisville Middle School support learning and teaching?

The following features of this visit are at the heart of the 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.

The team sought to capture what makes this school work, or not work, as a public institution of learning. Each school is unique and the team has tried to capture what makes Davisville Middle School distinct.

The team did not compare this school to any other school.

When writing the report, the team deliberately chose words that it thought would best convey its message to the school, based on careful consideration of what it had learned about the school.

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

The team made its judgment explicit.

This report reflects only the week in the life of the school that was observed and considered by this team. The report is not based on what the school plans to do in the future or on what it has done in the past.

This school visit is supported by the Rhode Island Department of Education as a component of School Accountability for Learning and Teaching (SALT). To gain the full advantages of a peer visiting system, RIDE deliberately did not participate in the active editing of this SALT visit report. That was carried out by the team's Chair with the support of Catalpa. Ltd.

The team closely followed a rigorous protocol of inquiry that is rooted in Practice-based Inquiry™ (Catalpa Ltd). The detailed *Handbook for Chairs of the SALT School Visit* describes the theoretical constructs behind the SALT visit and stipulates the many details of the visit procedures. Contact Rick Richards at (401) 222-4600 x 2194 or ride0782@ride.ri.net for further information about the *Handbook* or other SALT protocols. The *Handbook* and other relevant documents are also available at www.Catalpa.org.

SALT visits undergo rigorous quality control. Catalpa Ltd. monitors each visit and determines whether the report can be endorsed. Endorsement assures the reader that the team and the school followed the visit protocol. It also assures that the conclusions and the report meet specified standards.

Sources of Evidence

The Sources of Evidence that this team used to support its conclusions are listed in the appendix.

The team spent a total of over 140 hours in direct classroom observation. Most of this time was spent in observing complete lessons or classes. Almost every classroom was visited at least once, and almost every teacher was observed more than once.

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 team meetings spanning the five days of the visit. This time does not include the time the team spent in classrooms, with teachers, and in meetings with students, parents, and school and district administrators.

The team did agree by consensus that every conclusion in this report is:

- Important enough to include in the report
- Supported by the evidence the team gathered during the visit
- Set in the present, and
- Contains the judgment of the team

Using the Report

This report is designed to have value to all audiences concerned with how Davisville Middle School can improve student learning. However, the most important audience is the school itself.

How your school improvement team reads and considers the report is the critical first step. RIDE will provide a SALT Fellow to lead a follow-up session with the school improvement team to help start the process. With support from the North Kingstown School Improvement Coordinator and from SALT fellows, the school improvement team should carefully decide what changes it wants to make in learning, teaching, and the school, and amend its School Improvement Plan to reflect these decisions.

The North Kingstown School District, RIDE and the public should consider what the report says or implies about how they can best support Davisville Middle School as it works to strengthen its performance.

Any reader of this report should consider the report as a whole. A reader who only looks at recommendations misses important information.

2. PROFILE OF DAVISVILLE MIDDLE SCHOOL

Davisville Middle School, which opened in 1967, is located in the Town of North Kingstown in southern Rhode Island. From 1967 until the late 1970's, it served as a junior high school, housing only grades seven and eight. Since then, the school has become a middle school, serving students in grades six through eight. The Common Learnings Room, an amphitheater room, has recently received refurbishing.

A principal, one assistant principal, one full-time counselor, one part-time guidance counselor, 40 full-time and 11 part-time teachers, one SmART teacher, one nurse/teacher, one library/media specialist, one part-time technology coordinator, one school resource officer, three office clerks—two full-time and one half-time—one guidance/media clerk, four custodians, three school paraprofessionals, one clinic paraprofessional, and seven special education paraprofessionals serve the students at this school.

Of the 630 students enrolled in the middle school, 612 (97%) are white, nine (1.4%) are Hispanic, 13 (2%) are Asian Pacific Islander, 14 (2%) are Black, and five (1%) are Native American. One hundred and seventeen students (19%) receive special education services, nine (1%) are LEP students, and 105 students (17%) receive free and reduced-price lunch.

The administrators, teachers and staff have received various grants and honors in the recent past. Among these are 2003 Rhode Island Principal of the Year, 2004 Rhode Island Teacher of the Year, and 2003 NELMS Spotlight School award. Davisville Middle School students earn honors in many programs such as: the Student of the Month Award, "Grammar Police," "Math Marshals," End of Year Content Area Achievement Awards, Principal's Effort Award, Interscholastic Sports Award, Arts Competition Awards, R.I. Music Education Awards, and the Honor Roll Credit Card.

The school improvement plan for Davisville Middle School includes strategies for improving students' literacy and numeracy skills. Among these are the Totally Terrific Task Tuesdays for improving students' math concepts and problem-solving skills in math classes, the Six Traits Model for improving students' writing effectiveness skills in English Language Arts classes, and the use of three different approaches to reading for improving the basic understanding and analysis and comprehension in reading skills of students in all classes.

The school received several very noteworthy recognitions in the recent past. In both 2002 and 2003, Davisville Middle School was recognized as a Rhode Island Regents' Commended School for maintaining high performance and improvement in student achievement for three consecutive years. In fall 2003, the federal 'No Child Left Behind' legislation required schools throughout the United States to show progress in achievement on state assessments for all student subgroups. Schools received a classification based on the level of progress for all subgroups of students. Davisville Middle School was categorized as a *High Performing and Improving School* because all student subgroups made significant progress.

3. PORTRAIT OF DAVISVILLE MIDDLE SCHOOL AT THE TIME OF THE VISIT

As you approach Davisville Middle School, you may find the exterior to be a bit plain, but don't be fooled. The school within is bright, well maintained, and it exudes an abundance of warmth and caring. A myriad of art projects, colorful bulletin boards filled with student work, and displays honoring the school and its students are evident just inside the front door. The hallways and classroom areas are equally bright and busy, exhibiting student work, posters, rubrics, standards and statements of expectations.

The students are polite and well mannered. They acknowledge the importance of their job – to get an education. They enjoy and appreciate the efforts of the teachers, staff and administrators. The teachers and staff bring to their profession dedication, enthusiasm, and devotion to children that is commendable. The principal is a dynamic force within the school, empowering the staff to take the lead in the teaching-learning process. The leadership 'gets the big picture' when considering initiatives and school directives. The students and their education are the deciding factors.

Literacy across the content areas at Davisville Middle School is a high priority with the push for numeracy also gaining momentum. The school community fosters a positive climate within the school and continues to promote a safe environment for all. Although teachers make a concerted effort to collaborate, "teaming" occurs with limited grade-level and interdisciplinary coordination. Critical Friends groups are formed, but team assessment of student work does not occur routinely. Special education and Unified Arts teachers are infrequently included in these collaborations. The delivery of special education services to enhance learning through inclusion and co-teaching happens only rarely. While the Advisory program provides the time for personalization, some advisors do not take full advantage of the time allotted for the benefit of their students. The constraints of the present schedule also limit full realization of the rich program of education offered to the students here at Davisville Middle School.

4. FINDINGS ON STUDENT LEARNING

Conclusions

Overall, students write well. Most recognize and accept the importance of writing. They write routinely across the curriculum in various genres and for different purposes. Their writing includes reports, literary responses, narratives, scripts, poetry, journals, essays, and problem solving explanations. The quality of the writing varies across the grades, subjects and teams. All students have knowledge of a writing process and apply various parts of that process to their written work. While they know the elements of effective writing, not all students consistently demonstrate that they know how the parts fit together. Most students effectively revise their work for content. These skills are reflected in the eighty-four percent of eighth graders who achieved or exceeded the standard on the writing effectiveness subtest of the 2003 New Standards Reference Examination. However, they are in the formative stages of using editing skills to correct grammar, usage, punctuation, and paragraph structure. *(following students, observing classes, talking with students, teachers, and school administrators, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, discussing student work with teachers, reviewing classroom assessments, 2003 New Standards Reference Examination School Summaries, 2003 Rhode Island Writing Assessment results)*

Students apply math knowledge across the curricular areas with varying degrees of success. Most work effectively in collaborative groups to solve real world problems and write clearly to explain their solutions. The students indicate that they learn well from one another, when they are engaged in these group activities. Also, students use manipulatives well to enhance their learning. Most students are familiar with math vocabulary and use the language of math appropriately in various contexts. Typically, students practice math skills and problem solving, but the application of concepts is less evident. Although students frequently construct and use graphs, many are not clear about their interpretation of the data that is represented. The comparison of 2002 and 2003 data on the New Standards Reference Examinations shows that student achievement in math skills and problem solving has increased, while the achievement in the area of math concepts remains static. *(following students, observing classes, talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrators, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, discussing student work with teachers, reviewing classroom assessments, 2003 New Standards Reference Examination School Summaries, reviewing classroom textbooks, 2003 Information Works!)*

Students read well for both pleasure and life long learning. Some students pick up books to read after they have finished their class work. Many read for pleasure outside of school requirements. Others take advantage of silent reading times to become engrossed in reading. Many students read actively, think about their reading, make predictions, and learn to relate the material they have read to their personal lives and experiences. Students know how to respond to literature in many ways, including discussion, storyboards, and the arts. Others successfully comprehend fiction at the literal level but struggle to apply higher order thinking skills. Many students have difficulty reading nonfiction on their own. With teacher support, they utilize strategies to obtain information from textbooks. These observations correlate with the static test results over the last two years in the reading analysis and interpretation subtest of the 2003 New Standards Reference Examination. *(following students, observing classes, observing the school outside the classroom, meeting with the school improvement team, students, school and district administrators, parents, talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrators, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, discussing student work with teachers, reviewing classroom textbooks, 2003 New Standards Reference Examination School Summaries, 2003 Information Works!, 2003 SALT Survey report)*

Students at Davisville Middle School feel safe, and they come to school ready to learn. Overall, they are friendly, respectful and well behaved. Students work hard to improve the social environment in conjunction with the School Resource Officer and other staff members. They know that they are important in overall school change. They accept responsibility for themselves and their learning and know that success and hard work go hand-in-hand. *(following students, observing classes, observing the school outside the classroom, meeting with the school improvement team, students, school administrators, parents, talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrators, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, discussing student work with teachers, reviewing classroom assessments)*

Important Thematic Findings in Student Learning

Students read, write and practice math in all curricular areas.

Students come to school ready to learn.

Students have the knowledge to excel in reading, writing and problem solving and are ready to apply these skills in higher-level thinking.

5. FINDINGS ON TEACHING FOR LEARNING

Conclusions

The teaching of reading takes many forms at Davisville Middle School. Books are on display in nearly every classroom. Many teachers reinforce the value of reading in order to ensure life long learning. To that end, most teachers encourage students to read for pleasure, as well as for information. Some teachers use numerous methods and strategies to teach reading effectively. A number of teachers model reading for pleasure during silent reading time. An emphasis is placed on teaching students active reading strategies. However, there is no common approach to reinforce these reading strategies across and within grade levels and content areas. Frequently, teachers do not clearly teach the reading skills needed to enable students to move toward higher-level thinking. *(following students, observing classes, talking with students, teachers, discussing student work with teachers, reviewing classroom assessments, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, reviewing district and school policies and practices, reviewing records of professional development activities, reviewing school improvement plan)*

All math teachers engage students in ample practice of math skills and problem solving. They employ a variety of instruction strategies such as the use of manipulatives, collaborative grouping, and connecting math to real world situations. Teachers consistently reinforce correct mathematics language and vocabulary usage, both in speaking and in writing. Math teachers are concentrating their instruction to develop their students' understanding of concepts. Graph construction and subsequent data interpretation occur often in these classes. While science teachers incorporate math in their teaching, other content area teachers do not apply math skills, concepts, or problem solving on a regular basis. *(following students, observing classes, observing the school outside the classroom, meeting with the school improvement team, students, school administrators, parents, talking with students, teachers, and school administrators, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, reviewing classroom assessments, discussing student work with teachers, reviewing school improvement plan, reviewing classroom textbooks)*

Teachers routinely encourage writing in all subject areas. Writing is used for numerous purposes from factual reports to creative narratives. Most teachers provide students with clear writing guidelines and diverse prompts. They use well-established rubrics to assess students' work. Teachers participate in training in many currently accepted writing processes. Yet, teachers have not adopted a common writing process for all classes. English Language Arts teachers do an excellent job of teaching their students the elements of good writing. These include proper grammar, fluency, voice, and point of view. However, not all teachers teach their students how to put these isolated elements into a polished piece. *(following students, observing classes, meeting with the school improvement team, students, school and district administrators, parents, talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrators, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, discussing student work with teachers, reviewing classroom assessments, reviewing records of professional development activities, reviewing school improvement plan)*

The dedicated teachers at Davisville Middle School work to ensure the success of all students. Many teachers come before school begins and most stay beyond the school day to meet the standards of a *High Performing and Improving School*. Many participate on various committees, teach after school activities and provide students with extra help on a regular basis. Teachers show genuine concern for their students, and they are quick to address student issues. They actively participate in professional development to improve their craft and regularly use data to plan their instruction. Teachers demonstrate respect for their students, the staff and the school administrators, as well as for one another. (*following students, observing classes, observing the school outside the classroom, meeting with the school improvement team, students, school and district administrators, parents, talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrators, reviewing school improvement plan, reviewing district and school policies and practices, reviewing records of professional development activities*)

Commendations for Davisville Middle School

Enthusiastic, dedicated professionals

A strong sense of community

Willingness to learn and improve

Recommendations for Davisville Middle School

Develop and implement a common school-wide approach to the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics across all curricular areas.

Ensure that all teachers are teachers of reading, writing, and  mathematics[TAW1].

Continue to improve and encourage higher order thinking skills in all subject areas.

Recommendations for North Kingstown School District

Provide professional development for all teachers that will promote a common approach for teaching reading, writing, and mathematics.

6. FINDINGS ON SCHOOL SUPPORT FOR LEARNING AND TEACHING

Conclusions

The principal's leadership style accentuates the positive in the students, teachers, and staff. This attitude reflects the school's motto, "Be the best you can be." She is innovative, focused, experienced, informed and determined. She challenges both teachers and support staff not only to grow and experiment with new ideas and techniques, but also to assume additional leadership roles. She delegates many projects to individuals and teams, empowering them to be responsible for change. She credits her staff for the school's success; they credit her leadership for the same. *(following students, observing classes, talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrators, observing the school outside the classroom, meeting with the school improvement team, students, school and district administrators, and parents, reviewing district and school policies and practices, reviewing records of professional development activities)*

To its credit, Davisville Middle School has built time for an Advisory program into its schedule. This time provides for an Advisory period two times a week, yet the purpose of the program is not clearly evident to all. There is little consistency regarding the engagement of students and the use of advisory time. Some advisors are unsure of what strategies will help them reach the ultimate goal of connecting with their students. In these instances, a lack of focus and lost productivity exists. Other advisors clearly use this time effectively in meaningful activities that promote a sense of self worth and community. Parents and students both report that the value of Advisory varies according to the advisor. *(following students, observing classes, observing the school outside the classroom, meeting with the school improvement team, students, school administrators, parents, talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrators, reviewing school improvement plan)*

All Davisville Middle School teams create a sense of belonging for their students. Student concerns and issues are discussed at team time. The teams utilize this time fully for a myriad of tasks including parent conferences, as well as various discussions concerning IEP, 504, and MDT issues. The majority of team time is used for activities that limit the team's ability to focus on instruction issues. Most team meetings do not regularly include special educators or support services. The Unified Arts department members are not included in planning and instruction for interdisciplinary units. Few teams incorporate flexible scheduling to achieve their instruction goals. The present schedule allows for flexibility in grade six but discourages schedule flexibility in grades seven and eight. These factors limit the potential benefits of the middle school teaming approach. Also affected is the teachers' ability to provide interdisciplinary learning and cohesive instruction in reading, writing, and math for all students. *(following students, observing classes, observing the school outside the classroom, talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrators, meeting with students, parents, teams)*

Special educators work admirably with their students, even though equity within the Special Education program is not consistent. Teachers report that, lately, there is a more equitable distribution of resources—such as instruction materials, technology, and physical space—for student learning. Although all feel that they now have adequate space, there is a glaring contrast in the quality of that space. Partitioned classrooms, which have bookcases for walls, do not optimize teacher instruction or student learning. However, students and teachers persevere in the face of this obstacle. Most special education teachers are flexible and make every attempt to bring regular education strategies to their instruction, while others have a more narrow focus. Although a block of special education team time is built into the schedule, only a few teachers and paraprofessionals use this time for collaboration and communication. Also, special educators rarely participate in regular education team meetings. Inclusion with support within the classroom rarely occurs, limiting the full participation of special education students in the team concept. A well-defined model for inclusion at Davisville Middle School is not in place. This limits the opportunities for student success. *(following students, observing classes, talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrators, meeting with the school improvement team, students, school and district administrators, observing the school outside the classroom)*

The present schedule at Davisville Middle School has an adverse effect on the education program offered to students here. The practice of sharing staff members across the teams results in the loss of flexibility within the school day. The scheduling of reading and foreign language is a prime example of this. Sharing special education staff between grades is yet another example. Both create an inequitable programming situation for all students. Currently, the principal indicates that the school will investigate scheduling alternatives to create a flexible block schedule to alleviate some of these concerns. Also, the availability of late buses two afternoons each week limits the scheduling of, and student participation in, extracurricular activities. *(following students, observing classes, observing the school outside the classroom, meeting with the school improvement team, students, school administrators, parents, talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrators, reviewing school improvement plan)*

Many valuable initiatives are in place at Davisville Middle School. STAR (Stop, Think, Anticipate, and Respond), Operation Skill Builders, SmART integration of the arts, SRO (School Resource Officer), various student incentive programs, and staff recognition programs all promote a safe and positive school environment. The entire school community, including paraprofessionals and parents, works hard to promote and implement these programs and recognitions to provide the students with support and a strong sense of belonging. *(following students, observing classes, observing the school outside the classroom, meeting with the school improvement team, students, school and district administrators, parents, talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrators, reviewing school improvement plan, reviewing district and school policies and practices)*

Commendations for Davisville Middle School

Strong leadership

Inception of an advisory program

Creative initiatives

Recommendations for Davisville Middle School

Set a clear purpose for Advisory, and continue training advisors to make effective use of Advisory time.

Find ways to maximize team time for instruction purposes.

Foster better communication and articulation between and among core teams, and the Unified Arts and special education faculty.

Modify the schedule to allow for more flexibility in teaming, as described in *Turning Points 2000*.

Develop an inclusion model that supports all students in the classroom setting.

Address physical space concerns in special education classrooms.

Investigate alternatives, and implement a schedule that provides equal opportunity for all students.

Recommendations for North Kingstown School District

Increase faculty to enhance scheduling flexibility.

Provide additional late buses throughout the week.

Implement a special education inclusion model that provides in class support for all students. Provide relevant training for all teachers in the implementation of this model.

7. FINAL ADVICE TO DAVISVILLE MIDDLE SCHOOL

Davisville Middle School is a high performing and improving school. Its awards and recognitions are proof that the school is striving “*To Be All It Can Be.*” It should not stop there. Continue to be a forward thinking organization. You are doing a fine job—personally and educationally —of caring for your students. You have set numerous initiatives in place to support your students and improve their learning. The foundation of all you do at Davisville Middle School is your teaming structure. It is important to improve that structure so that you move your students to the next level in learning.

Therefore, consider revising the master schedule so that the following become possible. Implement a flexible schedule and grouping of students to facilitate creative and improved instruction strategies, as well as special education inclusion and optimal implementation of the Unified Arts program. Address the use of team time to protect as much time as possible for teams to focus on planning their instruction. Adopt an over-riding framework for the middle school, as part of your vision, one such as spelled out in *Turning Points 2000*. And finally, continue and expand your efforts in school-wide approaches to literacy and numeracy instruction and learning.

The district administration must be supportive of the school’s improvements, specifically in the areas of funding, training, and providing additional staff. Progress will not occur quickly without this support. The very competent staff and excellent leadership must be nurtured and encouraged to move the school further.

The sense of spirit and positive atmosphere that exists among all stakeholders in this school community is a wonderful, yet fragile, thing. Pay attention to it constantly so it is never lost. It is one of the intangible assets of Davisville Middle School that has brought it to where it is today. This positive atmosphere and spirit will be needed as the school takes its students to even greater levels of achievement.

Good luck to you all as you take your next steps toward excellence.

ENDORSEMENT OF SALT VISIT TEAM REPORT

Davisville Middle School

December 5, 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, 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.
December 31, 2003

REPORT APPENDIX

Sources of Evidence for This Report

In order to write this report the team examined test scores, student work, and other documents related to this school. The school improvement plan for Davisville 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 built its conclusions primarily from information about what the students, staff, and administrators think and do during their day. Thus, this visit allowed the team to build informed judgments about the teaching, learning, and support that actually takes place at Davisville Middle School.

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

- ◆ *observing the classrooms*
- ◆ *observing the school outside of the classroom*
- ◆ *following 11 students for a full day*
- ◆ *observing the work of teachers and staff for a full day*
- ◆ *meeting at scheduled times with the following groups:*
 - teachers*
 - school improvement team*
 - school and district administrators*
 - students*
 - parents*
- ◆ *talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrators*
- ◆ *reviewing completed and ongoing student work*
- ◆ *talking to teachers about the work of their students*
- ◆ *analyzing state assessment results as reported in Information Works!*
- ◆ *reviewing the following documents:*
 - district and school policies and practices*
 - North Kingstown School Department 2003-2004 Final Budget*
 - North Kingstown School Department Mentor Teacher Handbook*
 - North Kingstown School Department Teacher Evaluation Process*
 - North Kingstown School Department Curriculum Guides*
 - DMS Team Newsletters folder*
 - DMS Report Card*
 - DMS Team-O-Gram Progress Report*
 - “T to the Fourth Power!” folder*
 - SALT Visit Team packet*
 - DMS “Critical Friends” Professional Development folder*

Agreement between the North Kingstown School Committee and the North Kingstown Educational Support Personnel, July 2002-June 2003

Agreement between North Kingstown School Committee and the National Education Association, September 2000-August 2003.

Davisville Middle School Extra-Curricular Program Description, 2003-2004

Davisville Middle School Faculty Handbook

Free Lunches for Staff folder

Grammar Police folder

Honor Roll Credit Cards folder

Davisville Student Incentives Program folder

Math Across the Curriculum folder

Math Handbook

Operation Skill Builders folder

Parent Pak folder

Davisville Middle School Parent Volunteer Booklet, 2003-2004

Reading Strategies Handbook

Dragon Turf, School Newspaper folder

Davisville Middle School Self Study

School Improvement Team Meeting Minutes binder

North Kingstown School Department School Resource Officer folder

Student Planner

Students School Environment Improvement Plan folder

Davisville Middle School (DMS) Calendar Highlights folder

records of professional development activities

classroom assessments

school improvement plan for Davisville Middle School

district strategic plan

2003 SALT Survey report

classroom textbooks

2003 Information Works!

2003 New Standards Reference Examination School Summaries

2003 Rhode Island Writing Assessment results

School and District Report Cards

State Assessment Results for Davisville Middle School

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.

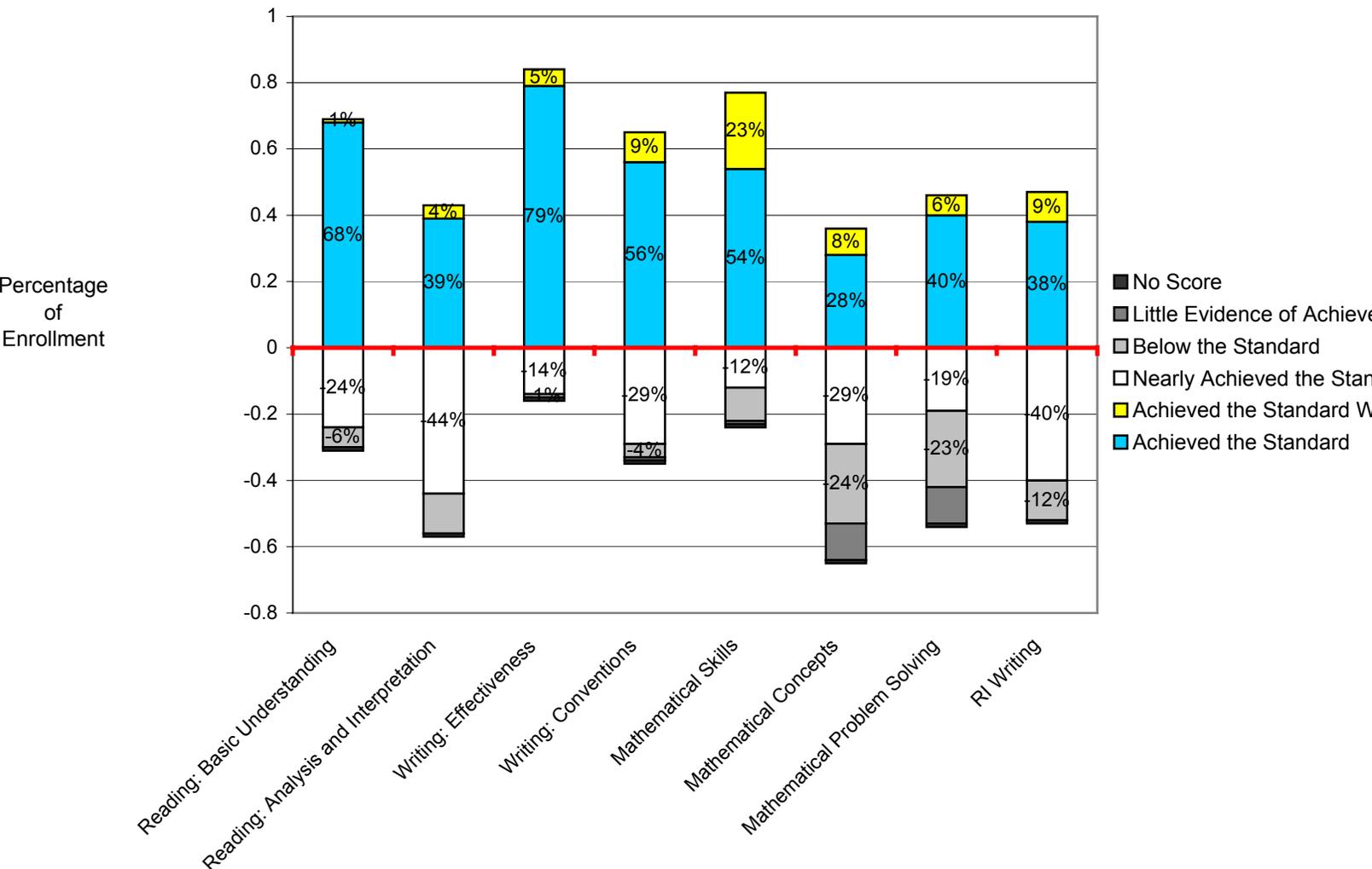
This school's results are from the latest available state assessment information. It is presented here in four different ways:

- ◆ against performance standards;
- ◆ compared to similar students in the state;
- ◆ across student groups within the school;
- ◆ and over time.

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 standards. 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*.

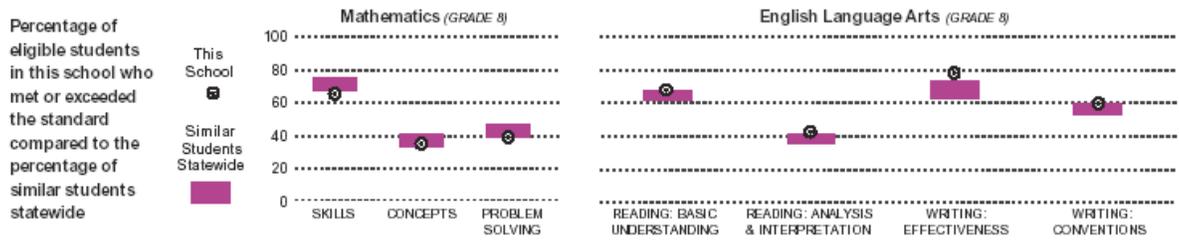
Table1. 2002-03 Student Results on Rhode Island State Assessments



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.

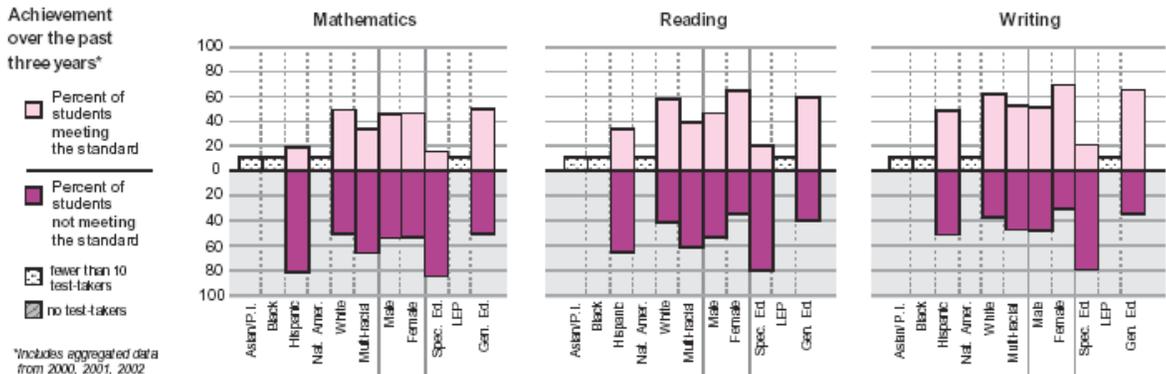
Table 2. 2001-2002 Student Results in Comparison to Similar Students Statewide



RESULTS ACROSS STUDENT GROUPS WITHIN THE SCHOOL

An important way to display student results is across different groups of students with different characteristics who are in the school. This display creates information about how well the school meets the learning needs of its various students. Since breaking students into these smaller groups can result in groups becoming too small to show accurate results, this display shows the results based on three years of testing. The Department defines an important gap between different groups (an equity gap) to be a gap of 15% or more.

Table 3. 2001-2002 Student Results across Subgroups



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. These results show changes in the percentage of students at or above standard and the percentage of students in the lowest performance categories. They 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.

The Davisville Middle School has been categorized as a high performing, and improving school in both math and English Language arts on the basis of its assessment results from 1998 to 2002. This school has been honored as a Regents' Commended School.

Information Works! data for Davisville Middle School is available at <http://www.ridoe.net>.

THE DAVISVILLE MIDDLE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT TEAM

Alexandra Aucoin, Student
Cathy Barry, Parent
Matthew Beatty, Student
Emily Bell, Teacher
Anne Bianchi, Paraprofessional
Mary Braman, Paraprofessional
Sandra Brown, Teacher
Jay Cieciorcka, School Resource Officer
Margaret Cole, Head Custodian
Carolyn Coppelino, Teacher
Kevin DuBois, Teacher
Marisa Eisner, Assistant Principal
Michelle King, Student
Jane Kondon, Principal
Anne Lipsitz, Parent
Lori Maroni, Nurse/Teacher
Sheila McGraw, Teacher
Mary Nelson, Parent
Candy Ohanian, Parent
Alyson Packhem, Student
Cheryl Pierce, Paraprofessional
Johann Prieto, Student
Geoffrey Sagamang, Student
Dave Stepka, Teacher
Kelly Stevens, Student
Savas Synodi, Teacher
Sarah Welesco, Student
Pat Wilkinson, Secretary

MEMBERS OF THE SALT VISIT TEAM

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Science Teacher
South Kingstown High School
South Kingstown, Rhode Island
on leave to the Rhode Island Department of Education
Office of School Improvement and Support Services
As a Regents' SALT Fellow
Team Chair

Joseph Bieczinski
Assistant Principal
Winman Junior High School
Warwick, Rhode Island

Robert Miller
Principal
Scituate Middle School
Scituate, Rhode Island

Erica Bulk
Grade 5/6 Teacher
Math and English Language Arts
Looping
Joseph H. Gaudet Middle School
Middletown, Rhode Island

Gerry Narkiewicz
Grade 8 Math Teacher
Knotty Oak Middle School
Coventry, Rhode Island

Jodi Clark
Grade 6 Social Studies
English Language Arts Teacher
Portsmouth Middle School
Portsmouth, Rhode Island

Jan Ragno
Aspiring Principal
Ponaganset Middle School
Glocester, Rhode Island

Kerri Ferreira
Grade 8 Resource Teacher
Joseph H. Gaudet Middle School
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Library Media Specialist
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Grade 7 Social Studies Teacher
Curtis Corner Middle School
South Kingstown, Rhode Island
Nancy Kapple
Grade 6 Social Studies and Reading
Teacher
Chariho Middle School
Wood River Junction, Rhode Island