



Raymond C. LaPerche Elementary School

SMITHFIELD

THE SALT VISIT TEAM REPORT



School Accountability for Learning and Teaching (SALT)

The school accountability program of the Rhode Island Department of Education

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**For information about SALT, please contact:
Rick Richards**

(401) 222-8401

rick.richards@ride.ri.gov

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Purpose and Limits of This Report

This is the report of the SALT team that visited Raymond C. LaPerche Elementary School from December 5-9, 2005.

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 designed to make it possible for visit team members to make careful judgments using accurate evidence. The 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 Raymond C. LaPerche Elementary School?

How well does the teaching at Raymond C. LaPerche Elementary School affect learning?

How well does Raymond C. LaPerche Elementary 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 Raymond C. LaPerche Elementary 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, 2nd Edition* describes the theoretical constructs behind the SALT visit and stipulates the many details of the visit procedures. The *Handbook* and other relevant documents are available at www.Catalpa.org. Contact Rick Richards at (401) 222-8401 or rick.richards@ride.ri.gov for further information about the SALT visit protocol.

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 ensures 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 110 hours in direct classroom observation. Most of this time was spent observing complete lessons or classes. Almost every classroom was visited at least once, and almost every teacher was observed more than once. Team members had conversations with various faculty and staff members for over 32 hours.

The full visit team built the conclusions, commendations and recommendations presented here through intense and thorough discussion. The team met for a total of 29.5 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 Raymond C. LaPerche Elementary 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 Smithfield School District 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 how it can amend its School Improvement Plan to reflect these decisions.

The Smithfield School District, RIDE and the public should consider what the report says or implies about how they can best support Raymond C. LaPerche Elementary 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 RAYMOND C. LAPERCHE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Raymond C. LaPerche Elementary School is one of four elementary schools in the Smithfield Public School system. The school is dedicated to Raymond C. LaPerche, a former teacher, principal and superintendent in the Smithfield Public Schools for 41 years. LaPerche first opened its doors in 1968 and presently serves students in kindergarten to grade five.

Of the 221 students who attend this school, 91% are white, 5% are Hispanic, 5% are Asian and 2% are black. Eleven percent of LaPerche students receive special education services, including speech and language. Less than 1% of the students are limited English proficient, and eight percent qualify for free or reduced price lunch.

The professional staff of Raymond C. LaPerche School consists of one administrator, 11 classroom teachers, two special educators, a reading specialist, an enrichment teacher and a speech and language specialist. The itinerant teachers include three physical education teachers, an art teacher, two music teachers and a librarian. In addition, one social worker, one school psychologist and one occupational therapist serve the school.

Several new school-wide programs and initiatives are underway. Professional development at this school focuses primarily on literacy, with an emphasis on guided reading and the *6+1 Traits of Writing* program. This year the district initiative is mathematics and building professional learning communities. Professional development generally includes in-school workshops and site visits, as well as out of district workshops. Job-embedded professional development opportunities exist to support teachers in the implementation of initiatives.

Students participate in a variety of school programs. The school-wide enrichment program supports activities such as the L.I.S.T. Science Fair, the 100 Day Museum, geography and spelling bees, TV Turn-Off Week and spirit days. The school celebrates character education initiatives at monthly town meetings conducted by participants of the Grade 5 student council. Grade four students participate in an anti-bullying program, a continuation from last year. Additionally, some students participate in an after-school Spanish program. The PTA sponsors fund raisers, cultural events and field trips, as well as supports LaPerche School in many ways, including funding for the library, guided reading and extra classroom supplies and equipment.

Raymond C. LaPerche is a Regents Commended School and is categorized as high performing and improving.

3. PORTRAIT OF RAYMOND C. LAPERCHE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL AT THE TIME OF THE VISIT

Nestled in the hills of Smithfield, Rhode Island, Raymond C. LaPerche Elementary School is set in a quiet residential area. Driving up to the entrance, one sees a beautiful gazebo constructed in honor of LaPerche's late beloved principal, whose illness and passing two years ago strongly affected the school and led to an extended period of interim leadership. When visitors enter, they see smiling students moving quickly and quietly through sparkling clean hallways. Camaraderie and teamwork permeate the school. Teachers proudly speak of the collaborative relationships that have produced their professional learning community. Students and parents describe the principal, faculty and staff in glowing terms. All exhibit a sense of pride in Raymond C. LaPerche Elementary School.

Teachers exemplify the statement by Maya Angelou that hangs in the center hallway: "The sum of us is greater than our parts." Their hard work and dedication is evident everywhere. Both teachers and support staff willingly work together beyond school hours and volunteer their time and resources to do whatever it takes to help their students. They meet regularly and frequently to improve their instructional practices.

During her brief eighteen-month tenure, the new principal has made many positive changes and implemented new initiatives using her knowledge of research-based instructional practices and her experience as a teacher and reading specialist. Students, parents, faculty and district administrators admire her forward thinking and dynamic leadership. Her open-door policy promotes communication, develops trust and creates a positive learning environment where everyone feels valued.

Regular educators, special educators, a reading specialist and an enrichment teacher instruct all students using an inclusionary learning model. In addition to creating opportunities for teachers to share their expertise, these inclusionary practices create a need for more differentiation of instruction, as well as for more consistency in teaching practices and student expectations.

With few exceptions, current high-quality educational practices, especially in the area of writing, can be observed in classrooms throughout the school. Yet, mathematical problem solving is an area of concern. Many teachers are struggling to fill the missing components in the existing math program to strengthen student learning. Teachers are just beginning to implement guided reading practices. Leveled trade books are minimally available. Integration of technology in teaching and learning is limited.

Despite these challenges, the LaPerche learning community is working together to bring the school to an even higher level of educational excellence.

4. FINDINGS ON STUDENT LEARNING

Students at LaPerche School are strong, proficient, fluent readers. Not only can most students effectively use several reading strategies to sound out words and understand text, most can explain the strategies and know why they use them. Student understanding and use of comprehension strategies builds from grade to grade. They know how to connect what they are reading to their personal experiences, to make predictions, to make inferences and to further question the text. Many confidently apply these good reading habits without teacher prompting. More important, they believe they are readers and enjoy choosing books to read independently. However, students do not read with the same level of success in all classrooms. In a few classrooms, students are frequently off-task. They distract their peers, do not participate in the reading lesson and fail to complete their written work. Students in these classrooms rarely use critical thinking skills to understand what they read. (*following students, observing classes, talking with students and teachers, meeting with the school improvement team, students, and school administrator, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, discussing student work with teachers, 2004 New Standards Reference School Summaries, reviewing classroom assessments, 2004 Information Works!, 2004 SALT Survey report*)

Students at LaPerche write well and enjoy writing. They know and clearly understand how to brainstorm ideas, write a draft, and revise and edit their work to produce well organized, polished pieces of writing. Without a doubt, students understand that writing is a communication tool and that how they use language is important. Students write with a strong voice, supporting details and leads that hook the reader. They say that writing with a strong voice helps the reader understand how they feel and makes their writing “sparkle.” Students eagerly share their writing with their peers and accept suggestions about how to improve their work. Students in many classes know how to use rubrics as a tool to improve their writing, but few know how to use rubrics to evaluate their own work. Many rely heavily on teachers to determine the quality of their writing. As with reading, the quality and quantity of student writing is noticeably lower in a few classrooms. In these classrooms, students mainly complete sentences, fill in blanks and do a limited amount of writing compared to their LaPerche grade level peers. (*following students, observing classes, meeting with the school improvement team, students, and school and district administrators, talking with students and teachers, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, discussing student work with teachers, reviewing classroom assessments, 2004 Rhode Island Writing Assessment results, 2004 New Standards Reference Examination School Summaries*)

The level and quality of student problem solving varies from class to class. In some classrooms, students do understand the math concepts underlying the problem. They work collaboratively and build on the ideas of others to solve problems in many different ways. They persist in finding solutions and explain their reasoning in a logical, sequential manner using appropriate mathematical language. Yet, in many classrooms teachers report that students just want to get to the answer rather than to think about why they do what they do. When given a mathematical problem, many have difficulty determining the problem that needs to be solved, the appropriate operation to be used or how to explain their thinking. They use logical reasoning when they test hypotheses while performing science experiments, yet often they do not realize that they are using problem solving strategies that can be applied to math. In a few classrooms students rarely problem solve at all. Hence, the majority of students are just beginning to learn the skills that will help them become effective problem solvers, *(following students, observing classes, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, talking with students and teachers, meeting with the school improvement team, students, parents, and school and district administrators, discussing student work with teachers, reviewing classroom assessments, 2004 New Standards Reference Examination School Summaries)*

Students are motivated, confident learners. They willingly take risks, ask questions and are not afraid to say they don't understand. These inquisitive learners use their background knowledge to make connections to their learning and clearly communicate their thinking. They are open-minded and persist to find solutions. They take responsibility for their actions and openly admit when they make poor choices. The SALT team is "wowed" by the kindness and respect students from kindergarten to fifth grade demonstrate toward one another and toward adults. *(following students, observing classes, observing the school outside the classroom, meeting with the school improvement team, students, parents, and school and district administrators, talking with students and teachers, 2004 SALT Survey report, reviewing completed and ongoing student work)*

Important Thematic Findings in Student Learning

Students:

- ◆ *Are skilled, confident, motivated learners*
- ◆ *Effective communicators*
- ◆ *Better readers and writers than problem solvers*

5. FINDINGS ON TEACHING FOR LEARNING

Conclusions

Most teachers teach reading effectively and know how to instill the love of reading in their students. They show students what expert readers do to understand what they read. They read aloud to their students with expression and enthusiasm that conveys a good understanding of the story. They motivate students to read by choosing quality literature of different genres and by studying authors' writing styles. They teach the appropriate use of reading strategies to their students. Yet, while classroom teachers plan their lessons with specialists and support personnel, they do not always target student instructional needs. In addition, not all teachers provide extra opportunities to challenge the more capable learners. Teachers report that most of the books in their classroom libraries are their personal collections and that they need more leveled books in order to meet the needs of their students. *(following students, observing classes, observing the school outside the classroom, discussing student work with teachers, talking with students and teachers, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, reviewing classroom assessments, 2004 New Standards Reference Examination School Summaries, reviewing district and school policies and practices)*

Most teachers are excellent writing instructors. Working collaboratively, teachers use a district-wide writing program and a common language as a foundation of knowledge that builds from grade to grade. Teachers say that this writing program gives them a guide and that student writing is more detailed and focused. As a result, writing instruction in most classrooms is coherent and powerful. During their lessons, most teachers emphasize what expert writers do to make their writing strong. They provide the opportunity for students to write daily and connect writing across the curriculum. They frequently conference with their students, monitor student progress and use what they learn to adjust their instruction. However, not all teachers use these effective teaching practices. Despite the use of a common rubric to evaluate student writing, teachers do not have the same understanding of what makes a quality writing piece. In addition, student writing in a few classrooms follows a prescribed format, lacks creativity, contains a limited number of sentences and does not match the high quality of other LaPerche grade level peers. Teachers report that they infrequently use technology to reinforce writing instruction. *(following students, observing classes, observing the school outside the classroom, discussing student work with teachers, talking with students and teachers, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, reviewing classroom assessments, 2004 Rhode Island Writing Assessment results, 2004 New Standards Reference Examination School Summaries, reviewing district and school policies and practices)*

The quality of math instruction varies from teacher to teacher. In some classrooms, teachers explicitly model how to use math strategies, share their thinking process and provide opportunities for their students to discuss and justify their work. They encourage their students to use manipulatives as tools to find solutions. They provide ample time and opportunities for students to explore math concepts, practice skills and build their mathematical reasoning. In these classrooms, students are developing the skills to be effective problem solvers. However, these good teaching practices are not evident in every classroom. In addition, teachers must supplement the *Investigations* math program for students to be successful in math. Teachers say that they spend excessive time identifying gaps between the math program and grade level expectations. They also report that they spend numerous hours locating and developing appropriate supplemental materials. Furthermore, parents and teachers say that students have difficulty with math in middle school due to the difference in instructional programs. The district reports that they are in the process of aligning their math curriculum with grade level expectations to identify missing components in the *Investigations* math program and to develop benchmarks to assist teachers with assessment and to guide their instruction. *(following students, observing classes, meeting with the school improvement team, parents, and school and district administrators, talking with students, teachers and school administrator, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, discussing student work with teachers, reviewing classroom assessments, classroom textbooks, reviewing school improvement plan)*

Teachers at LaPerche are hard-working, dedicated professionals who put their students first. Many are skilled expert instructors who emulate the qualities of expert learners by continually working to improve their teaching. Most pursue this goal actively by collaborating with their peers, trying new instructional practices and participating in professional development opportunities. This persistence and drive to improve carry over to their students. Teachers can be found in their classrooms long after the end of the school day working with their colleagues to plan, coordinate and enhance their lessons. Teachers work with their principal and district leadership to develop school-wide focus areas in reading and writing to promote consistent, high quality instruction. All take great pride in being part of the Raymond C. LaPerche family. *(following students, observing classes, observing the school outside the classroom, meeting with the school improvement team, students, parents, and school and district administrators, talking with students, teachers, and school and district administrators, reviewing records of professional development activities, 2004 SALT Survey report)*

Commendations for Raymond C. LaPerche Elementary School

- High level of teacher expertise
- Strong commitment to their students and teaching
- Genuine willingness to learn
- Collegial, collaborative staff

Recommendations for Raymond C. LaPerche Elementary School

- Increase the use and consistency of guided reading instruction. Continue professional development in guided reading and differentiation of instruction.
- Increase consistency of instruction in reading, writing and math. Use benchmark papers to guide consistent use of rubrics.
- Continue to move toward a writers' workshop model of instruction, as stated in the school improvement plan.
- Continue professional development to raise the level of expertise for math instruction. Use teacher experts on the staff. Read and utilize the professional resources available.
- Develop a quarterly list of math skills and concepts to ensure students meet grade level expectations. Develop benchmarks to ensure consistent assessment of student work.
- Ensure the consistent use of student conferencing in reading, writing and math in all classrooms to monitor student progress. Increase the use of this information to guide instruction.

Recommendations for Smithfield School District

- Increase the number of leveled books and provide multiple copies for both classroom libraries and the literacy closet.
- Provide adequate supplemental materials to support math instruction.
- Coordinate math programs between elementary and middle school.
- Continue to support professional development in reading, writing and math.

6. FINDINGS ON SCHOOL SUPPORT FOR LEARNING AND TEACHING

Conclusions

The principal is a strong educational leader. She visits classrooms daily to stay informed about the progress of her students. District leaders and teachers report, and the SALT team agrees, that she does not expect anything from her teachers that she does not expect from herself. She instructs students in the classroom, thus providing a positive role model for her teachers. She communicates with teachers regularly. She gives weekly feedback to teachers regarding their lesson plans and encourages them to use effective research-based instructional practices. Parents say she has “raised the bar” in her expectations of teachers, students and families. Her open door policy promotes trust and respect from the entire LaPerche learning community. Her distributive leadership style empowers her teachers and staff to become school leaders. Teachers report that under her leadership, teacher leaders emerged while preparing for the SALT visit. They say that leadership responsibilities are shared among staff members. *(following students, observing classes, observing the school outside the classroom, meeting with the school improvement team, parents, students, and school and district administrators, talking with students, teachers, parents, and district administrators, school communication binders, 2004 SALT Survey report)*

This strong leadership begins at the central office level. Central office leaders frequently visit and “keep their fingers on the pulse of the school” by talking with teachers, the principal and students. Students know them by name, and district leaders know students by name. They meet monthly with all the PTA presidents within the district to stay informed about parental concerns. They meet weekly with union leadership to keep the lines of communication open. Central office administrators lead and participate in professional development training. They involve teachers in curriculum development. Teachers, parents and the school administrator report that they feel supported by the district and that the district leaders listen to their opinions and value them. The district leaders report that they would not be able to provide high quality education without the dedication of this staff, the cooperation of the teachers’ union and the support of the Smithfield School Committee. *(following students, observing classes, meeting with the school improvement team, parents, and school and district administrators, talking with students, teachers, parents, and school and district administrators, reviewing records of professional development activities, discussing student work with teachers)*

Implementation of most goals stated in the school improvement plan is clearly evident throughout the school. Completed in April 2005 after an extensive self-study, the school improvement plan is the guiding document for instruction at LaPerche School. District leaders report that it aligns with the District Strategic Plan. More important, teachers say they use the plan to inform their teaching. All teachers had opportunities to provide input into the plan. However, little evidence exists regarding the implementation of the technology action steps. The principal reports that the school is just beginning to address the technology needs of the school and that the “school improvement plan is a work in progress.” *(following students, observing classes, observing the school outside the classroom, meeting with the school improvement team and school and district administrators, school improvement team binder, reviewing school improvement plan, LaPerche self-study, talking with teachers and school administrator)*

The effectiveness of the inclusion practices at LaPerche varies from class to class. Resource teachers, the enrichment teacher and the reading teacher all provide instruction and support within the general education classrooms. Common planning time is available for all teachers to plan and coordinate their instruction using student data. In some classrooms this inclusion model is highly effective. It provides students with positive learning models as well as opportunities for small group instruction and teacher collaboration. When teachers collaborate, co-teach and differentiate their instruction, students learn well. However, this effective inclusion practice does not occur in all classrooms. Instruction is not consistently differentiated to maximize student learning. Teacher expertise is not consistently utilized to its greatest potential. *(following students, observing classes, observing the school outside the classroom, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, reviewing district and school policies and practices, reviewing school improvement plan)*

Parents are an integral part of the LaPerche learning community. They volunteer in classrooms, read to students and provide enrichment activities. They spend countless hours leveling books, as well as organizing classroom libraries and the literacy closet. They support and show appreciation for teachers in many ways. Teachers and the principal report, and the SALT team concurs, that the PTA is vital. It provides financial support, sponsors cultural programs, and organizes social events and after-school activities. Parents work with teachers and the principal to publish a newsletter every two months that keeps everyone informed about what students are learning in school. Parents say a reciprocal relationship exists in which “teachers have expectations for parents and parents have expectations for teachers.” Teachers praise parents and say they could not do what they do without the high level of positive parent support. *(following students, observing classes, observing the school outside the classroom, meeting with the school improvement team, parents, and school and district administrators, talking with teachers, parents, and school and district administrators, PTA Minutes binder, LaPerche School Album of Events, RC LaPerche Newsletters 2005-2006)*

Commendations for Raymond C. LaPerche Elementary School

- Competent, dynamic leadership
- School-wide teacher collaboration
- Weekly common planning time
- Effective, frequent communication
- Supportive parental involvement

Recommendations for Raymond C. LaPerche Elementary School

Define roles and responsibilities of inclusion model personnel to maximize effectiveness of instruction. Continue professional development on inclusionary practices. Utilize teacher expertise that exists on this staff to increase the effectiveness of the inclusion model.

Increase differentiated instruction to meet the needs of all students. Increase and coordinate the use of student data and assessments to inform instruction.

Continue to encourage and support teachers’ use of research-based instructional practices.

Continue to give feedback to teachers regarding lesson plans.

Implement the integration of technology throughout the curriculum, as stated in the school improvement plan.

Recommendations for Smithfield School District

Provide resources and professional development in technology to implement the technology action plan fully.

Continue to fund and support personnel needed for effective inclusion classrooms

7. FINAL ADVICE TO RAYMOND C. LAPERCHE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

The SALT team wishes to acknowledge and commend you for the collaborative spirit that exists at Raymond C. LaPerche School. The coordination of your school-wide initiatives is impressive. The camaraderie and cooperation among the entire faculty and staff is a rare gift and contributes to your success and the success of your students. Use the collaborative spirit of your team to move on to the next level.

Develop continuity and common expectations for quality work in all classrooms. Increase differentiation of instruction. Clearly define roles and responsibilities of teachers, specialists and support personnel to increase your capacity to meet the challenge of helping all students learn well. Continue to use your common planning time to increase the effectiveness of the research-based practices that you have already begun so that student learning will continue to improve. Work together to integrate the use of technology throughout the curriculum, as stated in your school improvement plan. Your students will only benefit.

The SALT team urges you to continue to work as a cohesive team as you implement the recommendations in this report.

“Alone you can do so little, together you can do so much.” Helen Keller from the LaPerche school improvement team minutes.

ENDORSEMENT OF SALT VISIT TEAM REPORT

Raymond C. LaPerche Elementary School

December 9, 2005

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.

DRAFT Endorsement



CATALPA LTD.

Thomas A. Wilson, EdD

Catalpa Ltd.

December 30, 2005

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 Raymond C. LaPerche 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 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 Raymond C. LaPerche Elementary School.

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

- ◆ *observing classes directly*
- ◆ *observing the school outside of the classroom*
- ◆ *following 8 students for a full day*
- ◆ *observing the work of teachers and staff for a full day*
- ◆ *meeting at scheduled times with the following groups:*
 - teachers*
 - school improvement team*
 - school and district administrators*
 - students*
 - parents*
- ◆ *talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrators*
- ◆ *reviewing completed and ongoing student work*
- ◆ *interviewing teachers about the work of their students*
- ◆ *analyzing 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 Raymond C. LaPerche Elementary School
 - district strategic plan
 - 2005 SALT Survey report
 - classroom textbooks
 - 2005 Information Works!
 - 2004 New Standards Reference Examination School Summaries

Rhode Island Writing Assessment results
School and District Report Cards
Dr. Holder's Literacy Ideas binders 2004-2005
Raymond C. LaPerche Elementary staff meeting notes binders
2004-2005
LaPerche School Album of Events
Raymond C. LaPerche Elementary Communications binder
Raymond C. LaPerche Elementary Newsletters 2004-2005
Raymond C. LaPerche Elementary "Town Meeting" Packets
Raymond C. LaPerche Elementary school improvement team binder
Agreement between the NEA Smithfield and the Smithfield School
Committee September 1, 2005-August 31, 2008
Raymond C. LaPerche reading activities and enrichment binders
Raymond C. LaPerche Portfolio binder
Raymond C. LaPerche rubric binder
Raymond C. LaPerche discipline binder
Raymond C. LaPerche word of the day binder
Smithfield Public Schools curriculum guides in reading, writing,
math, science, social studies, library and visual arts, music
Raymond C. LaPerche Self-study
PTA minutes binder
Personal Literacy Plans binder
Reading Strategies binder
Response to Intervention binder

State Assessment Results for La Perche Elementary School

State assessment results create evidence that the visit team uses as it conducts its inquiry. The team uses the most recent evidence available to locate critical issues about the school. While 2005 state test score evidence is available for high schools, the most recent test score data for elementary and middle schools comes from 2004 testing. This school's results are presented here in three different ways:

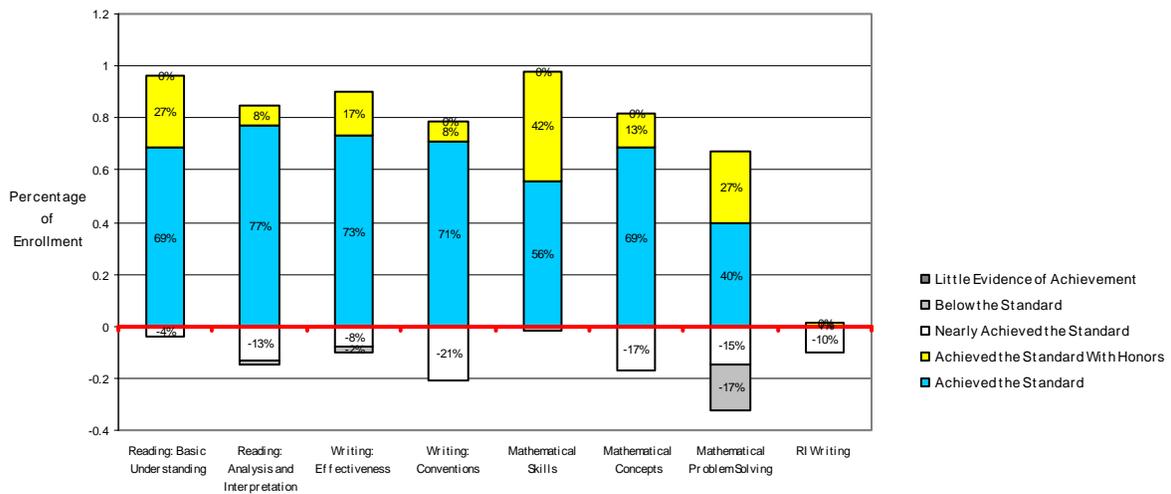
- ◆ *against performance standards,*
- ◆ *across student groups within the school, and*
- ◆ *over time.*

Information Works! data for La Perche Elementary School is available at [/www.infoworks.ride.uri.edu/2005/default.asp](http://www.infoworks.ride.uri.edu/2005/default.asp).

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. 2004 Student Results on Rhode Island State Assessments



2004 REPORT CARD FOR LA PERCHE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

This Report Card shows the performance of Raymond C. LaPerche Elementary School compared to the school’s annual measurable objectives (AMO). These report card scores describe Raymond C. LaPerche Elementary School as a *high performing and improving school*.

In 2005, schools were classified by their attendance rate. Using this measure alone, La Perche Elementary made *adequate yearly progress*.

Index Proficiency Score, 2002-04	English Language Arts Target score: 76.1				MATHEMATICS Target score: 61.7			
	this School	Target Met?	this District	thE State	this School	Target Met?	this District	thE State
All Students	92.6	YES	93	86.1	85.1	YES	83.5	77.5
African Americans	*	YES	*	77.8	*	YES	*	65.9
Asian	*	YES	*	84.5	*	YES	*	77.1
Hispanic	*	YES	*	75.8	*	YES	*	65.8
Native Americans	*	YES	*	83.9	*	YES	*	73
White	92.8	YES	93	88.5	85.2	YES	83.4	82
Students with Disabilities	*	YES	81.3	69.5	*	YES	75.9	66.4
Students with Limited English Proficiency	*	YES	*	68.9	*	YES	*	61
Students who are Economically Disadvantaged	*	YES	*	77.8	*	YES	*	68.4

PERCENT of students tested, 2002-04	Target: 95%			
	this school	target met?	THIS DISTRICT	the state
English Language Arts	100	YES	100	99.1
Mathematics	100	YES	100	99.4

Attendance Rate	Target: 90%			
	this school	target met?	THIS DISTRICT	the state
	96	YES	96.3	94.8

TARGETS MET/MISSED, THIS SCHOOL		
	TARGETS MET	TARGETS MISSED
English Language Arts Index Score	9	0
Mathematics Index Score	9	0
Percent Tested	2	0
Attendance Rate	1	0

this school is classified as:

High Performing and Improving

KEY: * Student group has too few students to calculate results.
 † "Safe Harbor" - Student group has fallen short of the target but has made sufficient improvement over last year's score.
 †† Student group has met the target based only on the most recent year of test results. NOTE:
 For information on targets and classifications, please see Quick Guide .

THE RAYMOND C. LAPERCHE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT TEAM

Denise Cinquegrana
Paraprofessional

Linda Carley
Grade 4 Teacher
SIT Co-Chair

Cynthia DeBlois
Parent

Rebecca DelGallo
Parent

Lori Fontana
Special Education Teacher

Barbara Furtado
Reading Specialist

Shelah Gaudet
Grade 3 Teacher
Technology Coordinator

Deborah Johnson
Grade 2 Teacher

Michelle Laliberte

Parent
Lena Martel
Grade 1 Teacher

Donna Olson
Principal

Doreen Sanderson
Parent

Michelle Siddall
Parent

Luigia Solda
Librarian

Joanne Squillante
Special Education Teacher
NBCT

Amy Zigas
Grade 3 Teacher
NBCT

Laura Zucker
Grade 1 Teacher
NBCT

MEMBERS OF THE SALT VISIT TEAM

Ruth S. Haynsworth
Grade 5 Teacher
Stony Lane Elementary School
on leave to the
Office of Progressive Support and Intervention
Rhode Island Department of Education
Regents SALT Fellow
Team Chair

Bernadette Bowen
Kindergarten Teacher
Woodridge Elementary School
Cranston, Rhode Island

Lori DeSimone
Grade 2 Teacher
Lincoln Central Elementary School
Lincoln, Rhode Island

Lynn Haberek
Grade 1 Teacher
Hope Valley Elementary School
Chariho Regional School District
Hope Valley, Rhode Island

Alexandra Hentz
Grade 3 Teacher
Primrose Hill Elementary School
Barrington, Rhode Island

Heather Marciello
Grade 2/3 Inclusion/Looping Teacher
Charles Fortes Elementary School
Providence, Rhode Island

Margaret L. Marcotte
Principal
Silver Spring Elementary School
East Providence, Rhode Island

Cynthia Reiser-Jones
Librarian
Charlestown Elementary School
Chariho Regional School District
Charlestown, Rhode Island

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR MEMBERS OF VISIT TEAM

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