



# Roger Williams Middle School

PROVIDENCE

## THE SALT VISIT TEAM REPORT

November 18, 2005



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 Roger Williams Middle School from November 14 - 18, 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 Roger Williams Middle School?

How well does the teaching at Roger Williams Middle School affect learning?

How well does Roger Williams 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 Roger Williams 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, 2<sup>nd</sup> 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](http://www.Catalpa.org). Contact Rick Richards at (401) 222-8401 or [rick.richards@ride.ri.gov](mailto: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 147.5 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. Also, the team spent a total of over 72.5 hours interviewing teachers, administrators, and staff.

The full visit team built the conclusions, commendations and recommendations presented here through intense and thorough discussion. The team met for a total of 28.5 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, parent, 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 Roger Williams 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 Providence School Department 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 Providence School Department, RIDE and the public should consider what the report says or implies about how they can best support Roger Williams 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 ROGER WILLIAMS MIDDLE SCHOOL

Roger Williams Middle School was built in 1932 with Works Progress Administration (WPA) funds. The school opened in January, 1932 and was later called Roger Williams Junior High School. In 1993, Roger Williams became a Carnegie School and adopted the middle school concept, becoming Roger Williams Middle School. The school is located in a mixed residential and commercial area, not far from interstate 95 in Providence, Rhode Island.

There are approximately 815 students at Roger Williams Middle School in grades six through eight. Sixty-eight percent of the students are Hispanic, 18% are African-American, 7% are white, and 6% are Asian. Approximately 80% of the students qualify for the free or reduced price lunch. Twenty-six percent of the students receive ESL/bilingual education services, and 17% receive special education services.

Seventy teachers work at Roger Williams Middle School. Of these, 11 are sixth grade teachers, eight are seventh grade teachers, six are seventh and eighth grade ESL/Bilingual teachers, 10 are eighth grade teachers, and 13 are special needs teachers. Also, there are seven unified arts teachers, a three member guidance department, two instructional coaches, two speech teachers, two social workers, a nurse, a librarian, a Spanish teacher, a diagnostic prescriptive teacher, and a psychologist. Further, there are 19 aides and clerks, seven custodians, and four cafeteria workers. The administrative team consists of a principal and two assistant principals.

Beyond core subject areas, the school offers students instruction in art, family and consumer science, Spanish, and computers. Students who read three or more years below grade level receive reading instruction through READ 180. An after school program offers students the opportunity to participate in clubs and other activities that provide enjoyment, as well as academic enrichment. These include, for example, Young Doctor's, a homework club, Science Olympiad, theater, art club, and athletics. Several community partners support these programs and other school activities including Brown University, Johnson & Wales University, the Rhode Island Children's Crusades, Rhode Island Hospital, Hasbro Children's Hospital, and the Southeast Asian Community Center.

### 3. PORTRAIT OF ROGER WILLIAMS MIDDLE SCHOOL AT THE TIME OF THE VISIT

Roger Williams is a large and complex, urban middle school. The red brick and granite columned building provides a calm and serious face to the more than 900 students, parents, community members, faculty, staff, and administrators who enter its doors each day. Yet, recent and significant transitions and challenges have shaken the school and threaten the stability and health of its foundations—its students, faculty, and administration.

Most students value learning and come here to be educated to fulfill their goals to go on to high school and college and to pursue the futures of their dreams. While some realize their hopes and receive a quality education, many others do not. Most students do not read, write, or problem solve at proficient levels, and many are disengaged from learning. Further, a culture of disrespect exists among many students that results from their disengagement and interferes with the learning of all.

Teachers care about their students and say they want to teach at this school and see it improve. They also speak about their cohesiveness and how they have held the school together in face of its recent transitions. While some are effective teachers, who provide excellent instruction that is relevant, engaging, and thoughtfully designed to help their students grow and achieve, not all reach these high standards. Too many teachers do not have high expectations for their students. They do not provide relevant instruction that leads to significant achievement or manage their classrooms in ways that prevent or minimize behavior problems.

A significant transition at Roger Williams Middle School is the new administrative team. While this team has a plan and a vision, the entire school community waits cautiously to see if they can make their vision a reality. In addition to the roadblocks of unsatisfactory student learning and behavior and inconsistent instruction and classroom management, the administrative team also identifies central challenges such as scheduling problems that preclude the best middle school practices, the delivery of services to ESL/bilingual and special needs students and the need to build capacity within the school building.

Still other challenges beset this school and call out for solutions—involving more parents and community partners, harnessing professional development to serve the needs of the faculty, and focusing the many district policies and initiatives. However, no challenge is greater than bringing to life the themes represented by the three totems newly carved and located in the central hall—the eagle, fox, and turtle, representing *respect*, *courage*, and *leadership*.

## 4. FINDINGS ON STUDENT LEARNING

### Conclusions

Many students read below grade level. These students mispronounce words, skip words they do not know, fail to use context clues, and do not comprehend much of their reading. Although students learn strategies to improve their reading across the content areas, most have difficulty applying these strategies. Some students are successful readers and critically discuss books, relate their reading to their own lives and other books they have read, and even carry books with them to read independently. However, most students do not value reading beyond the classroom and say that it is something they do just for school. *(following students, observing classes, meeting with the school improvement team, talking with students, teachers, and school administrators, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, school and district report cards, discussing student work with teachers, reviewing classroom assessments, reviewing school improvement plan, 2004 New Standards Reference Examination School Summaries)*

Although students say they like to write, most student written work lacks appropriate organization, grammar, and detail. These students can record facts and data, copy notes, and write at a basic level. Their work does not show the qualities of accomplished writing or proper writing conventions. Some students write well and can “explode the moment.” They can produce detailed journals and effectively use writing techniques such as simile, metaphor, and personification. Some also connect with their readers when they write about their proudest moments. Importantly, students write more enthusiastically when the topic connects to them. Despite this evidence, too few students demonstrate strong writing in their daily schoolwork. *(following students, observing classes, meeting with students, talking with students and teachers, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, discussing student work with teachers, reviewing classroom assessments)*

Many students are not effective problem solvers. They do not persist in finding solutions, use multiple strategies, or take risks in their classes. Students say that they like hands-on activities and enjoy the challenge of thinking critically and problem solving. They noted, and the SALT team saw, that they are not challenged often enough. Some students do practice and become better problem solvers, when they develop mnemonic devices to remember specific concepts, use multiple strategies to complete sentence stems using personification, and calculate costs and discounts for purchases. While this limited practice is helpful, it is not sufficient or widespread enough for all students to become effective problem solvers. It is not surprising that New Standards Reference Examination Scores from 2000 – 2004 show a consistent poor performance in reading analysis and interpretation and mathematical problem solving. *(following students, observing classes, meeting with students, talking with students and teachers, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, discussing student work with teachers, reviewing classroom assessments, 2000 - 2004 New Standards Reference Examination School Summaries)*

Most students want to learn and say they want to do well in school. They say that school is important because they want to go to college and become doctors, lawyers, architects, and computer programmers. Unfortunately, students also say that this school is not helping them to get into the high schools they need to in order to reach their goals. The schoolwork is not challenging or interesting for many students, and they do not receive appropriate or sufficient support and guidance to do it well. A distinct minority of students is disengaged and says that they do not care about school or learning. *(following students, observing classes, observing the school outside of the classroom, meeting with the school improvement team, students, school and district administrators, and parent, talking with students, teachers, and school administrators, discussing student work with teachers)*

Student misbehavior is a significant problem in the school and in many classrooms. Students throughout the school routinely ignore school rules and policies for behavior and academics. This misbehavior negatively impacts the majority of the students who want to learn and succeed in school. While some students say that they have learned to ignore bad behavior, they still find it distracts and takes away from their time and opportunities to learn. Importantly, students report, and the SALT team observed, that the classrooms that are “organized and in control” have fewer behavior problems and are subsequently more orderly and effective. *(following students, observing classes, observing the school outside of the classroom, meeting with the school improvement team, students, school and district administrators, and parent, talking with students, teachers, and school administrators, 2003-2004 Information Works!)*

## Important Thematic Findings in Student Learning

Students:

- ◆ *Want to learn and enjoy being challenged*
- ◆ *Enjoy learning when it connects to their own lives*
- ◆ *Have difficulty applying strategies to improve their learning*
- ◆ *Do not demonstrate grade level proficiency in reading, writing, and problem solving*
- ◆ *Do not feel the school adequately supports their learning nor consistently provides opportunities for success*

## 5. FINDINGS ON TEACHING FOR LEARNING

### Conclusions

The teaching of reading is inconsistent across grade levels and content areas. Teachers say that the wide range of reading abilities in their classes presents a real challenge, and some acknowledge that they do not know how to teach reading as well as they would like. Some teachers teach reading effectively and use every possible resource at their disposal. They teach their students to discuss selections critically, ‘stop and jot,’ write focus questions, and predict outcomes. This effective instruction produces more successful and engaged readers. While most teachers recognize the importance of reading, many do not consistently or effectively provide strategies to help their students improve. These teachers assume that students know reading strategies and do not directly guide or teach them how to read. They also struggle to help their students match strategies to reading. *(following students, observing classes, talking with students and teachers, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, discussing student work with teachers, reviewing classroom assessments, classroom textbooks)*

Many teachers in all content areas use writing as an essential part of their instruction, although the effectiveness of this practice varies. Some teachers value the process of writing, connect writing to real-life situations, and develop students’ voices as writers. In these classes, teachers help their students enjoy and improve their writing and hold them to high expectations. Unfortunately, many other teachers have their students use writing primarily to record notes and fill-in worksheets and as ‘busy work.’ These teachers do not reward excellence in writing and give credit for work regardless of quality. Often, they tell their students what to write, do not help students develop their creativity, do not use writing as a tool for thinking, and fail to connect writing to their students’ lives. Students in these classes find no joy in writing and are often not held accountable for their work. *(following students, observing classes, meeting with students, talking with students and teachers, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, discussing student work with teachers, reviewing classroom assessments)*

Most teachers do not routinely teach their students how to solve problems effectively or provide them with sufficient opportunities to practice. Teachers who struggle to teach problem solving often point to students’ lack of basic skills and motivation as the main explanation. They do not encourage students to develop questions, explore strategies, find solutions, or take risks. These teachers also do not allow sufficient time for students to persist and allow them to give up too quickly—often by supplying the answer without an explanation. However, some teachers do teach problem solving effectively through well-designed lessons, scaffolding, and good classroom management. They design and teach lessons that feature hands-on, relevant problem solving activities that ignite student interest, curiosity, and persistence. These teachers develop and adapt their lessons to connect their students’ interests to the curriculum and inject life-skills into their teaching. However, too few do this, providing insight into the consistently poor scores on the New Standards Reference Examination tests. *(following students, observing classes, meeting with students, talking with students and teachers, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, discussing student work with teachers, reviewing classroom assessments, 2000-2004 New Standards Reference Examination School Summaries)*

Teachers care about their students and say that they want to be here and that they appreciate working with their colleagues. However, they are frustrated by inconsistent leadership, unclear expectations, changing demands from “downtown,” a lack of parental involvement, and student apathy and disrespect. This frustration undermines their ability to work through these and other problems that confront the school. While some teachers persevere in the face of these challenges and work for change, others close their doors and do their best; some have given up, and still others wait for change to happen from the outside. *(following students, observing classes, observing the school outside of the classroom, meeting with the school improvement team, students, school and district administrators, and parent, talking with students, teachers, and school administrators, discussing student work with teachers, reviewing classroom assessments)*

Teachers report frustration with school-wide behavior and discipline and say that there is a general culture of disrespect. The SALT team concurs that misbehavior is a significant problem in this school. Yet, it notes that the teachers who have higher expectations for good student behavior are respected and have fewer discipline problems. These teachers start their classes on time, have established classroom routines and rituals, and keep students engaged through the entire instructional time, preventing problems. Conversely, too many teachers have low expectations of student behavior, ignore disrespect, and discipline inconsistently in their classrooms and the hallways, thereby empowering students to misbehave. *(following students, observing classes, observing the school outside of the classroom, meeting with the school improvement team, students, school and district administrators, and parent, talking with students, teachers, and school administrators, reviewing district and school policies and practices, 2005 Information Works!)*

Some teachers design excellent lessons that engage, challenge, and promote student learning. These teachers feel it is their responsibility to provide a high quality education to their students, and they deliver. They are valued by students and are an asset to the school. Other teachers aspire to this goal and are working to become better teachers by sharing their lessons with their colleagues and trying to connect their instruction to their students. However, too many teachers are ineffective in the classroom—their lessons are unstructured and irrelevant. They neither use time effectively nor provide clear expectations or helpful feedback to students. *(following students, observing classes, meeting with the school improvement team, students, and school and district administrators, talking with students, teachers, and school administrators, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, discussing student work with teachers, reviewing classroom assessments, reviewing school improvement plan)*

## Commendations for Roger Williams Middle School

- ◆ *Caring faculty who desire to work here*
- ◆ *Teachers who recognize the importance of literacy*
- ◆ *Writing that is an essential part of instruction*

## Recommendations for Roger Williams Middle School

- ◆ *Make strong reading, writing, and problem solving instruction consistent throughout the school.*
- ◆ *Raise expectations for student learning.*
- ◆ *Design lessons to be more effective, relevant, and engaging for all students.*
- ◆ *Make full use of instructional time.*
- ◆ *Expect excellence in student behavior in all classrooms and throughout the school.*
- ◆ *Establish classroom routines and rituals to promote effective discipline.*
- ◆ *Share the expertise of teachers in the school, and allow them to collaborate to improve the quality of instruction throughout the school.*
- ◆ *Unite as a faculty to work through the problems that confront the school.*

## Recommendations for Providence School Department

- ◆ *Work with the school and the faculty to improve the design and delivery of instruction in all content areas.*
- ◆ *Work with the school and the faculty to improve the consistent implementation of class and school discipline.*
- ◆ *Acknowledge and tap into the expertise of all teachers and staff to improve teaching and behavior management.*

## 6. FINDINGS ON SCHOOL SUPPORT FOR LEARNING AND TEACHING

### Conclusions

This school currently suffers from a lack of consistent leadership. The district administrator, faculty, and staff state that the administrative team is a “work in progress;” the SALT Team concurs. The administrators say that they want to work together to improve the school, to develop an instructional leadership team, and to build on their strengths. They acknowledge that the transition has been difficult and state that they have not had enough time to implement their plans. While all are hopeful of improvement, serious challenges confront this team. The leadership team does not present a united front to either the faculty or the students. Meetings, manifestation hearings, the discipline process, and other basic logistics of school management do not work well. The administrators recognize that they do not meet or collaborate nearly enough to establish clear expectations for learning, teaching, and discipline and have initiated plans to meet more frequently. Further, although the team speaks of a vision for a three-year plan to “build school capacity and carve a niche,” this draft plan is not yet shared nor made clear among the school community. *(following students, observing the school outside of the classroom, meeting with the school improvement team, students, school and district administrators, and parent, talking with students, teachers, and school administrators, reviewing district and school policies and practices)*

The implementation of consequences for misbehavior is inconsistent and inadequate. The school administrators spend a great deal of their time and effort dealing with this issue, but their efforts are mostly reactive and do not solve the problem. There is also a divide over who is responsible for discipline. Teachers and administrators do not agree about responsibility for class and school-wide discipline. Administrators neither set the tone nor hold the staff accountable for the enforcement of appropriate discipline. Although faculty and staff lament the culture of disrespect and say, “Students have the power,” their efforts to correct this are inadequate. No one regularly monitors the halls or stairways, students are not held to appropriate standards of behavior, and classroom discipline varies greatly. The SALT team concurs with the few teachers who say that improving discipline is a collective responsibility. *(following students, observing classes, observing the school outside of the classroom, meeting with the school improvement team, students, school and district administrators, and parent, talking with students, teachers, and school administrators, discussing student work with teachers, reviewing school improvement plan, reviewing district and school policies and practices)*

Teachers and administrators say that Roger Williams Middle School is a middle school in name only. The current schedule does not support the learning community. Students do not have access to the range of electives or classes they need to achieve their educational goals. The schedule is inflexible, and once students are placed in a program, for example, they say they are “stuck for the year.” Teachers say the current schedule also does not allow time for them to meet in teams or by department to collaborate, improve, and align their practice. Members of the school community attribute recently improved test scores to teaming and say that “teams are sorely missed” and are needed to help this school improve. The absence of time to meet and collaborate does limit the school’s ability to serve students’ needs. *(following students, observing classes, observing the school outside of the classroom, meeting with the school improvement team, students, and school and district administrators, talking with students, teachers, and school administrators, 2000-2004 New Standards Reference Examination School Summaries, reviewing school improvement plan)*

There is a range of academic support programs available to students at this school. Access to these programs is limited, and they are scheduled to fit the needs of the school rather than the needs of the students. Unfortunately, all programs are not available to all students who need them. For example, inclusion is available to eighth grade students only, while intensive resource is available in only the sixth and seventh grades. Despite these gaps, many special education classrooms and services meet the needs of their students. Many ESL/bilingual classes provide solid instruction that fosters student growth, but some classes have too many students, and the course schedule does not allow for student movement between levels. *(following students, observing classes, meeting with students and school administrators, talking with students, teachers, and school administrators, discussing student work with teachers, reviewing classroom assessments, reviewing completed and ongoing student work)*

There is very little evidence of parental involvement in this school. Some teachers and the recently constituted Parent Teacher Organization work hard to engage families in the education of their children. Other teachers say that it is very difficult to reach parents or to persuade them to come to the school or help their children with their schoolwork. While the teachers and administrators say that they value parental involvement, there is not a systematic effort to involve parents in significant ways in this school. *(following students, observing classes, observing the school outside of the classroom, meeting with the school improvement team, students, school and district administrators, and parent, talking with students, teachers, and school administrators, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, reviewing school improvement plan, 2005 Information Works!)*

Several successful community partnerships engage the students both in and out of the school. Programs such as Lifespan’s Young Doctors and Powerlunch, the Rhode Island Children’s Crusade, the Educational Talent Search, Brown University’s FitNuts, and the Southeast Asian Community Centers’ Southeast Asian Club all “provide enjoyment as well as academic enrichment.” Many students report that they enjoy these opportunities and wish there were more. Other students would like to see additional programs and after school activities such as interscholastic and intramural sports, computers, technology, music, chorus, and dance. *(following students, observing the school outside of the classroom, meeting with the school improvement team, students, and school and district administrators, talking with students, teachers and school administrators, reviewing school improvement plan)*

The professional development system available to teachers does not adequately serve the needs of the teachers or the school. Teachers indicate that the enrollment in many of these programs is full before they can enroll, and they must choose from what is available. The administrators report that they have little control or input over the professional development the teachers choose and that the professional development system does not supply the training teachers need in this particular school. This disconnect between need and availability limits the development and implementation of consistent instructional practices across all content areas and grade levels. (*observing classes, meeting with the school improvement team, and school and district administrators, talking with teachers and school administrators, reviewing school improvement plan, discussing student work with teachers, reviewing district and school policies and practices, reviewing records of professional development*)

Although the mission statement of Roger Williams Middle School is to “maximize the potential of every student,” the overall low expectations of this learning community promote a culture that accepts academic mediocrity and inappropriate behavior. While there are teachers who keep their expectations at a high level, this school has not consistently created a climate that “affords the opportunity for all students to achieve high standards.” (*following students, observing classes, observing the school outside of the classroom, meeting with the school improvement team, students, school and district administrators, and parent, talking with students, teachers, and school administrators, reviewing school improvement plan*)

## Commendations for Roger Williams Middle School

- ◆ *Successful community partnerships*
- ◆ *Supportive special education and ESL/bilingual classes*
- ◆ *Efforts to strengthen the PTO*

## Recommendations for Roger Williams Middle School

- ◆ *Hold all members of the school community accountable for clear expectations of excellence in academics.*
- ◆ *Establish a consistent code of discipline, and hold the entire school community accountable for appropriate behavior.*
- ◆ *Share the vision for your three-year plan and school identity with all stakeholders.*
- ◆ *Schedule regular meetings for the administrative team.*
- ◆ *Find ways for teachers to meet with their colleagues to collaborate and improve and align their practices.*
- ◆ *Focus professional development to roll out consistent instructional practices across all content areas and grade levels.*
- ◆ *Improve student access to electives, appropriate classes, and support services beyond current limitations.*
- ◆ *Develop strategies, and create a systematic approach to increase meaningful parental involvement.*
- ◆ *Expand community partnerships and after-school programs to meet the needs and interests of more students and families.*

## Recommendations for Providence School Department

- ◆ *Support the administrative team in establishing the school's vision and improving the culture of the school.*
- ◆ *Work with the school to implement an effective discipline program.*
- ◆ *Work with the school to provide professional development that reflects the needs of the school.*
- ◆ *Provide funding necessary to re-establish teaming and to provide a range of student support and after-school programs.*

## 7. FINAL ADVICE TO ROGER WILLIAMS MIDDLE SCHOOL

Realizing that it is the people—not the bricks or the books—that make a school excellent, the entire Roger Williams School community must focus on its central mission to educate its students.

Your students want to do well. Rise to this challenge by setting high expectations for their academic achievement and appropriate behavior.

Meet with your colleagues to plan and share. Operate as a unified team to impact student learning positively, gain student respect, build relationships, and establish a respectful, disciplined learning environment.

The administrative team needs to create a culture of effectiveness and trust. Develop and implement a comprehensive and relevant vision that requires and encourages excellence from teachers and students.

Fully embrace your students, their parents, and the community—you cannot create a successful school without them.

All the stakeholders of this community—the Providence School Department, school administrators, teachers, staff, students, families, and community partners—need to form a truly cohesive bond. Without this convergence of energy and efforts, Roger Williams Middle School will fail to unlock the potential of its students.

# ENDORSEMENT OF SALT VISIT TEAM REPORT

## Roger Williams Middle School

November 18, 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, 1<sup>st</sup> edition*.

Since unexpected circumstances might result in either the team or the school straying too far from the protocol for a visit, Catalpa monitors both the school and the team during a visit regarding the conduct of the visit.

Most often actual visit events or issues do not challenge a report's legitimacy and Catalpa's monitoring and endorsement is routine. A district administrator, principal, faculty member or parent may not like a report, or think it is too negative, or think the visit should have been conducted in a manner that is not consistent with the protocol. None of these represent a challenge to a report's legitimacy; concerns that might challenge an endorsement are based on events that stray too far from the protocol.

The Catalpa review of this visit and this report was routine.

The steps Catalpa completed for this review were:

- discussion with the chair about any issues related to the visit before it began
- daily discussion of any issues with the visit chair during the visit
- observation of two portions of the visit
- discussion with the principal regarding any concerns about the visit at the time of the visit
- thorough review of the report in both its pre-release and final version form

The findings from the review are:

1. This team was certified to meet team membership requirements by RIDE staff.
2. This report was produced by a legitimate SALT Visit that was led by a trained SALT Visit Chair and conducted in a manner that is consistent with SALT Visit procedures.
3. The conclusions are legitimate SALT visit conclusions.
4. The report is a legitimate SALT visit report.

Accordingly, Catalpa Ltd. endorses this report.



**CATALPA LTD.**

Thomas A. Wilson, Ed.D.

Catalpa Ltd.

December 4, 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 Roger Williams 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 Roger Williams Middle School.

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

- ◆ *observing classes directly*
- ◆ *observing the school outside of the classroom*
- ◆ *following 12 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
  - grade level curriculum guides
  - Roger Williams Faculty Toolkit
  - records of professional development activities
  - classroom assessments
  - school improvement plan for Roger Williams Middle School
  - district strategic plan
  - classroom textbooks
  - 2005 Information Works!
  - 2004 New Standards Reference Examination School Summaries
  - School and District Report Cards

## State Assessment Results for Tolman Senior High School

Assessment results create sources 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 about 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 three different ways:

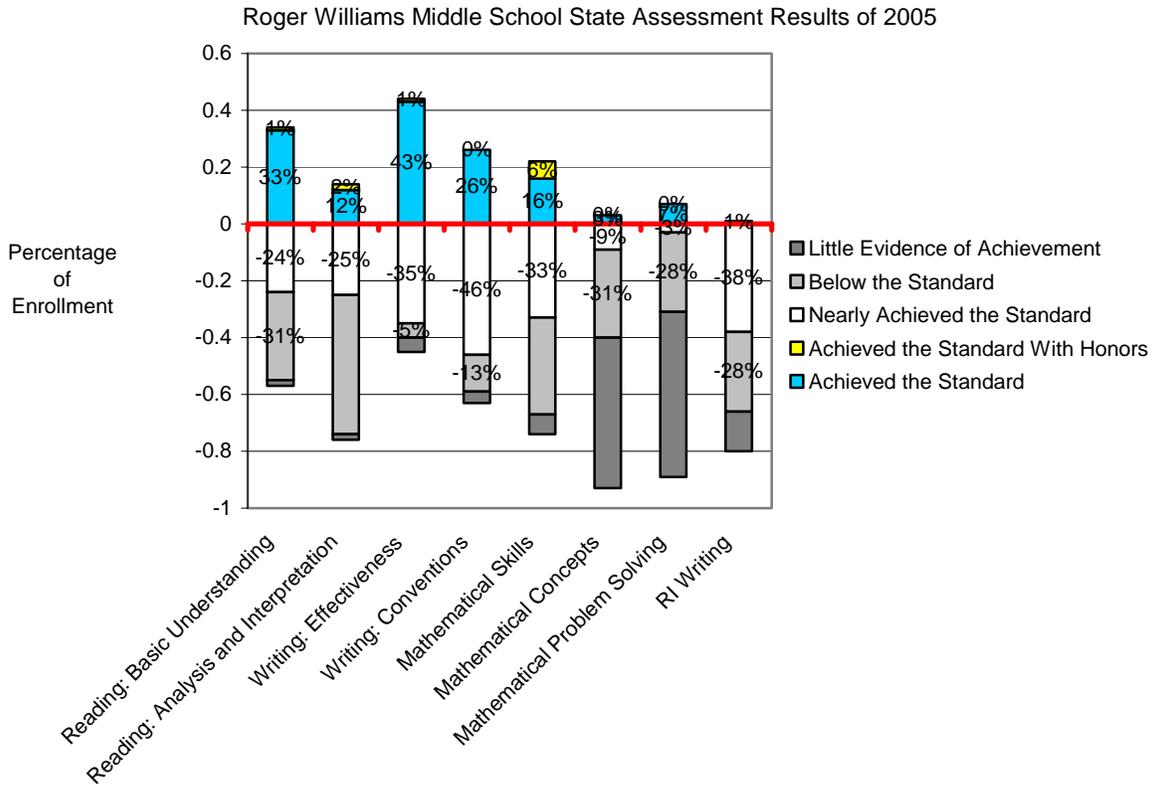
- ◆ *against performance standards,*
- ◆ *across student groups within the school, and*
- ◆ *over time.*

Information Works! data for Tolman Senior High 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*.

**Table1. 2003-04 Student Results on Rhode Island State Assessments**





## REPORT CARD FOR ROGER WILLIAMS MIDDLE SCHOOL

This Report Card shows the performance of Roger Williams Middle School compared to the school's annual measurable objectives (AMO).

These report card scores describe Roger Williams Middle School as a school in need of improvement/insufficient progress.

*Table 3. Report Card for Roger Williams Middle School*

Index Proficiency Score, 2002-04	English Language Arts Target score: 68				MATHEMATICS Target score: 46.1			
	this School	Target Met?	this District	thE State	this School	Target Met?	this District	thE State
All Students	63.7	YES††	66	80.3	42.6	YES††	44.9	66.5
African Americans	67.9	YES††	65.9	71.2	41.6	NO	42.5	49.5
Asian	74	YES	71	79.3	54.2	YES	52.3	64.9
Hispanic	63.7	YES††	65.5	69.5	43.1	YES††	43.9	48.8
Native Americans	*	YES	66.3	76.7	*	YES	39.7	58.6
White	65.7	YES†	69.5	84.4	44.6	YES††	51.1	72.8
Students with Disabilities	44.4	YES†	45.5	63.3	29.4	YES††	31.4	46.8
Students with Limited English Proficiency	55.5	NO	55.3	61	36.9	YES†	38.1	43.3
Students who are Economically Disadvantaged	65.1	YES††	65.8	70.8	43.6	YES††	44.1	50.9

PERCENT of students tested, 2002-04	Target: 95%			
	this school	target met?	THIS DISTRICT	the state
English Language Arts	95.8	YES	95.7	98.6
Mathematics	96	YES	96.3	98.8

Attendance Rate	Target: 90%			
	this school	target met?	THIS DISTRICT	the state
	86.6	NO	89.2	93.6

TARGETS MET/MISSED, THIS SCHOOL		
	TARGETS MET	TARGETS MISSED
English Language Arts Index Score	8	1
Mathematics Index Score	8	1
Percent Tested	2	0
Attendance Rate	0	1

this school is classified as:

**School in Need of Improvement/  
Insufficient Progress**

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:

## THE ROGER WILLIAMS MIDDLE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT TEAM

Marianne Russo  
School Improvement Team Chair  
Teacher

Roseclaire Bulgin  
Principal

Ryan Connole  
Teacher

Maria DaCruz  
Teacher

Barbara DeRita  
Parent

Lila Gray  
Teacher

Jane Healey  
Teacher

Rose Johnson  
Teacher

Beverly Loebenberg  
Teacher

Samantha Martino  
Student

John Morgan  
Community Representative

Julie Motta  
Teacher

Denise Nicolazzi  
Parent

Dee Paux  
Teacher

Oriana Pinheiro  
Teacher

Jacinta Robinson  
Student

## MEMBERS OF THE SALT VISIT TEAM

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