



Primrose Hill School

BARRINGTON

THE SALT VISIT TEAM REPORT

March 10, 2006



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 Primrose Hill School from March 6-10, 2006.

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 Primrose Hill School?

How well does the teaching at Primrose Hill School affect learning?

How well does Primrose Hill 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 Primrose Hill 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.

The team closely followed a rigorous protocol of inquiry that is rooted in Practice-Based Inquiry®¹ (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. To gain the full advantages of a peer visiting system, RIDE did not participate in the editing of this SALT visit report. That was carried out by the team's chair with the support of Catalpa. Ltd. 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 92.5 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. Team members had conversations with various faculty and staff members for over 29.5 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 30 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 Primrose Hill School can improve student learning. However, the most important audience is the school itself.

This report is a decisive component of the Rhode Island school accountability system. The Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) expects that the school improvement team of this school will consider this report carefully and use it to review its current action plans and write new action plans based on the information it contains.

¹ Practice-Based Inquiry® is a registered trademark of Catalpa Ltd.

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 Barrington 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 Barrington School Department, RIDE and the public should consider what the report says or implies about how they can best support Primrose Hill 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 PRIMROSE HILL SCHOOL

Primrose Hill School is one of three primary schools in the town of Barrington, Rhode Island. The school first opened in 1954. Throughout the years, the building has been renovated to meet the needs of a fluctuating population. In 1992, three classrooms were added, and storage space was converted into a health room. The school grounds include a fenced kindergarten play area, several sets of play equipment and a large field area.

Primrose Hill School services 347 students in pre-school through grade three. Ninety-five percent of the students are white, four percent are Asian, and one percent is black. Four students receive English as a Second Language (ESL) services, 5% qualify for free and reduced price lunch, and 14% receive special education services. Autistic children from across the district come to Primrose Hill School to attend the integrated special needs preschool. These students are members of inclusive classrooms and receive support from teacher assistants and a special educator.

The Primrose Hill School staff includes 50 full- and part-time employees. One administrator leads the school. A head teacher assists in her absence. The full-time faculty includes 16 classroom teachers, a librarian, a music teacher, a reading teacher, a speech and language pathologist, a special education teacher, and a resource teacher. Eight special education assistants, one secretary, one building assistant, two custodians and two lunchroom personnel complete the full-time staff. A physical education teacher, an art teacher, an enrichment teacher, an ESL teacher, a nurse, an occupational therapist, a physical therapist, a psychologist, a social worker, a pre-school speech and language pathologist, a technology specialist, and a resource teacher work at Primrose Hill part-time. Additionally, a building intern substitutes each day, where needed.

A variety of classroom configurations exist at Primrose Hill. Parents of first grade students can choose to place their children in a three-year multi-age program or a 1-2 looping program, where students remain with the same teacher for more than one year. Students who are not developmentally ready for the rigors of first grade can be placed in the K/1 program. In this classroom, the kindergarten curriculum is taught in the morning, and there is individualized instruction for first graders in the afternoon.

Professional development plays an important role at Primrose Hill. Grade level teachers have common planning time each week. Their agendas include collaborative planning, looking at student work and grade level, school or district issues. This is the sixth year that Primrose Hill School has participated in the University of Pittsburgh's Principles of Learning. A lab classroom exists to serve as a model for reading workshop instruction. Additionally, teachers voluntarily participate in discussion groups where they discuss professional texts they have read.

Several supports are in place to meet the needs of individual students. The Response to Intervention process provides specific interventions to help individual students who are having difficulty. Enrichment programs both within and outside the classroom provide students with extra challenges and extra resources to extend their knowledge.

The principal, teachers, staff, students and parents of Primrose Hill work together to build a professional learning community. Teachers meet regularly to improve their instructional practices. Parents reinforce the learning of their children at home, participate in the PTO and volunteer in classrooms.

3. PORTRAIT OF PRIMROSE HILL SCHOOL AT THE TIME OF THE VISIT

Primrose Hill School is truly unique. Children are the central focus here. Students take responsibility for their learning and behavior. In this school, teachers are “masters of their craft,” and parents value an education. A strong sense of community permeates the school. The banner, “Effort = Success,” is prominently displayed in the foyer and sets the tone for learning.

The learning environment at Primrose Hill is one of acceptance, self-reliance, independence and respect. Members of this learning community demonstrate a thorough understanding of the basic tenets inherent in quality learning and teaching. High expectations coupled with effective research-based instructional practices push students and teachers to be diverse thinkers and successful learners. A variety of classroom configurations exist, including multi-age, looping, integrated pre-school and a combination kindergarten-first grade program. In all of these settings, teaching decisions are based upon “what is best for kids.”

A circle of support for student learning exists. Enrichment, inclusionary practices and the Response to Intervention model are important aspects of this school. Teachers, support staff and all school personnel view “all students as their students” and work collaboratively to provide the best instruction possible. Students accept and support one another in their daily learning. It is almost impossible to identify the students who receive specialized instruction.

Effective leadership exists at every level. Strong teacher leaders share their expertise with their colleagues. The principal, who will retire this year, encourages her teachers to try new things, to challenge themselves and to continue to improve their teaching practices. District leadership values teachers, listens to their concerns and provides them with extensive professional development. All hold high expectations for their individual and shared work.

Although students are achieving, Primrose Hill cannot rest on its laurels. Not all instruction is delivered with the same level of expertise. Action steps in the school improvement plan are not specific and do not adequately reflect the teaching practices within the classrooms. There is no coordinated curriculum for the instruction of social studies.

4. FINDINGS ON STUDENT LEARNING

Conclusions

Most students at Primrose Hill School are confident, independent writers who write well. They proudly state that they are “authors and writers” and eagerly share their work with anyone who will listen. They take pride in their writing and strive to make it better. Student folders contain numerous writing pieces that show student command of the writing process, from pre-writing to the final product. As a result, most students write easily and confidently using a variety of strategies. Most writing includes a rich vocabulary, a strong voice, and supporting details that “create pictures in the readers’ minds.” Students write in all content areas including math, art, music, science and reading. They willingly accept suggestions from their peers and persist until they clearly convey their message. They use “editing phones” to hear their mistakes. They use checklists to make certain their writing includes critical elements. Most importantly, students at Primrose Hill understand that writing is a tool that helps them communicate what they know and express their personal views and feelings. *(following students, observing classes, observing the school outside the classroom, talking with students and teachers, meeting with the school improvement team, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, discussing student work with teachers, reviewing classroom assessments)*

Students at Primrose Hill are unique and effective problem solvers who embed problem solving in everything they do. They use problem-solving skills in all areas of the curriculum, as well as in their daily social interactions. Students ask probing questions, use “accountable talksm” and challenge one another’s thinking. They frequently talk themselves through a problem to find a solution. Students say that they check their reasoning and determine the next step by thinking about what to do and saying it aloud. They know how to use specific strategies that are appropriate to solve the problem. They know how to use a variety of resources, tools and past experiences to deepen their understanding of the problem and to extend their learning. Students at Primrose Hill are proficient, creative and organized problem solvers. *(following students, observing classes, observing the school outside the classroom, meeting with the school improvement team and students, talking with students and teachers, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, discussing student work with teachers, reviewing classroom assessments, reviewing school improvement plan)*

Students at Primrose Hill are successful, effective readers who read to learn in all content areas. These students know that reading is critical to their learning. They know how to choose appropriate reading strategies and how to read for different purposes, and they take great pride in explaining the learning strategies they have been taught. They know how to read critically and make predictions, inferences and comparisons as they read. They listen attentively when students and teachers read aloud and frequently connect what they read to other books they have read, as well as to their personal and past experiences. One student reports, "Good readers ask good questions." This good reading behavior is evident throughout the school as students actively participate in book discussions and express their ideas and opinions about what they have read. Students often use the rich vocabulary from their reading in their discussions, as well as in their writing. Additionally, students often recommend literature to their peers and substantiate their recommendations with evidence from the text. Students at Primrose Hill see themselves as authors and enjoy writing books. *(following students, observing classes, observing the school outside the classroom, meeting with students and school and district administrators, talking with students, parents and teachers, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, discussing student work with teachers, reviewing classroom assessments, reviewing school improvement plan)*

Students are persistent, motivated, curious learners who think and work independently, as well as collaboratively. They are not afraid to make mistakes. They confidently speak in front of their classmates, both in their classrooms and at monthly Town Meetings, proudly sharing poems, paintings and songs related to what they have learned. They believe their opinions are valued. Open discussions and affirming comments among and from peers and teachers reflect this belief. Students work together and learn from one another. Most importantly, they hold themselves accountable to produce high quality work and consistently challenge themselves to "put (their) brains to the test." Student reflections show that students think about what they have learned and that they set goals for their personal improvement. They question their thinking, test new ideas and use this information to extend their knowledge. This thinking process is embedded in the way they learn. Parents report, and the SALT team agrees, that Primrose Hill students are happy, confident, successful learners. *(following students, observing classes, observing the school outside the classroom, meeting with students, parents and district administrators, talking with students and teachers, 2004 SALT Survey report)*

Important Thematic Findings in Student Learning

Students:

- ◆ *Connect reading, writing and problem solving to facilitate their learning*
- ◆ *Are confident, independent, and resourceful learners*
- ◆ *Are effective communicators*

5. FINDINGS ON TEACHING FOR LEARNING

Conclusions

Most teachers at Primrose Hill are excellent writing instructors. They frequently share their personal writing and model what good writers do. They use quality literature to teach their students to write like authors, emphasizing voice, supporting details and rich, descriptive language. As a result, most student writing contains these elements. Throughout the grades, teachers use common terminology and assessments to provide consistent, quality instruction. In many classrooms, during writing instruction, trained parent volunteers help students with their writing while teachers conference with students to address their individual needs. Teachers show students that writing is a tool to enhance their learning and hold them accountable for quality work. As a result, students want to improve their writing and know what to do to make it better. Yet, some teachers report that they need to do more work in writing instruction. They say that the teaching of writing is one of the more challenging parts of the curriculum because there is always room for growth. This philosophy is the driving force behind student success. *(following students, observing classes, observing the school outside the classroom, talking with students, teachers, parents and school administrator, meeting with the school improvement team and students, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, discussing student work with teachers, reviewing classroom assessments, reviewing school improvement plan)*

Teachers at Primrose Hill School are exemplary instructors of problem solving. They weave problem solving into every facet of student learning and communicate a multitude of ways to solve problems. They provide and respect the time students need to think, question and reason. They use common terminology and model the thinking process that shows students how to build on one another's ideas. As a result, students are effective problem solvers who embed problem-solving strategies in everything they do. Teachers encourage, require and push students to solve problems independently throughout the day. Using district-wide rubrics, exemplars and benchmarks, teachers evaluate student work during grade level meetings, and they use this information to inform and differentiate their instruction. This practice helps them establish consistent, clear, high expectations for themselves and their students. *(following students, observing classes, observing the school outside the classroom, talking with students and teachers, meeting with the school improvement team, students and school and district administrators, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, discussing student work with teachers, reviewing classroom assessments, reviewing school improvement plan)*

Teachers at Primrose Hill School view and teach reading as an invaluable learning tool, and they do it well. The teaching of reading is integrated into all areas of the curriculum from music to mathematics. They model and explicitly teach specific strategies for different reading purposes. They use information from extensive assessments to address individual student needs. They regularly evaluate student progress, regroup students and adjust their instruction accordingly. These effective teaching practices help teachers plan lessons that target student needs. As a result, most students read well. More importantly, teachers help students understand that reading is a way to learn. They use quality literature to launch thematic units, projects and math lessons. They ask questions that require students to make connections to their previous personal experiences, literature and other content areas. They often facilitate discussions to encourage “accountable talksm.” Primrose teachers and support personnel work together to build a community of readers where students clearly understand that reading is an important learning tool. *(following students, observing classes, observing the school outside the classroom, talking with students and teachers, meeting with the school improvement team, students and school and district administrators, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, discussing student work with teachers, reviewing classroom assessments, reviewing school improvement plan, classroom textbooks)*

Teachers at Primrose Hill see themselves as learners and model effective learning behaviors for all students. They value one another and learn from the expertise of their peers. Their encouragement, patience and respect motivate students to improve and challenge themselves. They think critically, verbalizing their thinking process. They show students, by example, how to take risks, collaborate, problem solve and listen. As a result, students emulate these behaviors in the classroom and think critically about what they are learning. While all teachers do not teach with the same level of expertise, all teachers do make instructional decisions based upon what is best for their students. *(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, parents and school administrator, discussing student work with teachers)*

Commendations for Primrose Hill School

Fostering student responsibility and independence

High, clear expectations of everyone

Integration of reading, writing and problem solving

Recommendations for Primrose Hill School

Continue to share your expertise and to reflect on the instructional strategies that are working most effectively for students in reading, writing and problem solving.

Investigate continued professional development in writing instruction.

Continue to use data from assessments and student work to guide your instructional decisions.

Continue to integrate reading, writing and problem solving.

Continue to increase student-centered learning to promote successful, independent learners.

Strive to align your expectations for quality work in and across grade levels.

Recommendations for Barrington School District

Continue to support common planning time and grade level meetings.

Continue to help teachers make informed decisions using data.

Continue to support professional development at the building level.

6. FINDINGS ON SCHOOL SUPPORT FOR LEARNING AND TEACHING

Conclusions

The principal of Primrose Hill sets the tone for this learning community. She leads by example and tells her staff, "If we are not moving forward and changing, we are slipping behind." She demonstrates her commitment to this philosophy by devoting faculty meetings to professional development activities, by scheduling common planning time, by providing constructive feedback and by actively seeking needed resources from central office based on teacher input and student needs. She strives to find a balance between the new initiatives and the practices that have worked well with students in the past. She respects and values the professionalism of her staff, believes that teachers have the right to state their opinions and trusts them to make sound instructional decisions. There is respect among the principal and central office, faculty, staff, parents and students. All members of this learning community report that the principal is a strong, effective leader who has created a family atmosphere that puts students first. All express their sadness about her upcoming retirement. *(following students, observing the school outside the classroom, meeting with the school improvement team, parents and school and district administrators, talking with teachers and parents, 2004 SALT Survey report)*

This strong leadership begins at the central office level. These central office leaders trust and value the expertise, commitment and professionalism of teachers at Primrose Hill School. They report that the success of students is due to the dedication of the teachers. These leaders provide materials, professional development and support for teacher-driven initiatives, as evidenced by the various classroom configurations at Primrose Hill School. They strive for consistency and equity among all schools within the district by coordinating curriculum, resources, district assessments and district-level professional development. A new teacher evaluation tool is in place. Teachers report that the new Teacher Appraisal Program gives teachers credit for what they are doing and supports their professional growth and practice. Open communication is welcomed between the school and the district. Teachers and parents report that they feel free to express their concerns with the district superintendent and that their opinions are valued. The central office administrators report that their vision for this school is that every student becomes proficient, learning continues to be fun and that the Primrose Hill learning community continues to take risks that challenge central office to move forward with new initiatives. *(meeting with the school improvement team, parents and school and district administrators, talking with teachers and school administrators, reviewing district and school policies and practices, 2004 SALT Survey report, reviewing records of professional development activities, Barrington Public Schools Teacher Appraisal binder)*

The SALT team commends the thorough self-study conducted by the entire Primrose Hill staff. Teachers report that this study helps them examine their instruction and focus on the learning needs of their students. The school improvement team used the information from this study to write their school improvement plan. Additionally, the team reports that the new format for the plan is user-friendly and more informative to teachers. Implementation of many of the action steps is evident throughout the school. Effective monitoring tools are in place and help teachers accurately measure student progress. Teachers use the information from these monitoring tools to adjust their instruction. However, the action steps in teaching for learning do not state specific instructional practices, but rather address professional development or monitoring activities. As written, these action steps do not reflect the effective instructional practices that are happening in the classrooms. *(following students, observing classes, meeting with the school improvement team and school and district administrators, talking with teachers, reviewing school improvement plan, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, reviewing classroom assessments, reviewing district strategic plan)*

The inclusionary model at Primrose Hill School is exemplary. The most striking observation is that it is almost impossible to identify the special needs students. All students see themselves and others as valued, active members of this learning community, and all of them live by the philosophy that “Effort equals Success.” Teachers continually reassess student progress and make instructional decisions about where and how to instruct students based upon their needs. They teach students within and outside the regular education classroom. This learning community expects students to produce high quality work. The continuum of specific learning support helps every student succeed. *(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, discussing student work with teachers, reviewing school improvement plan, reviewing classroom assessments)*

The “Response to Intervention” model positively impacts the delivery of student support services, providing a “circle of support.” At Primrose Hill School, students receive immediate intervention support as soon as a need is identified. This problem-solving philosophy encourages accountability and responsibility “for all students by all staff.” This belief has changed the role of many service-providers, freeing them to work with students more frequently rather than primarily administer assessments. Based upon their specific needs, students receive intervention instruction from many professionals, including the speech and language pathologist, the occupational therapist, the resource teacher, the reading specialist, the psychologist, the social worker, the librarian, the enrichment teacher or any other appropriate member of this learning community. Administrators report the number of special education referrals has dramatically decreased, and teachers report that student achievement is increasing. *(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, discussing student work with teachers, reviewing school improvement plan, reviewing classroom assessments)*

All stakeholders work together to expand and enrich learning. They value and respect the tenet that students learn in different ways, and they encourage students to express their learning through art, writing, movement, music and public speaking. Monthly student-run Town Meetings celebrate and showcase student work. Classroom teachers and specialists collaborate and co-teach thematic, interdisciplinary units and activities. Numerous opportunities and choices exist for enrichment, such as “Lunch and Learn,” Continental Math League, Junior Great Books, chess club, mileage club and other activities. Teachers report that these enrichment opportunities, part of the “circle of support,” allow every student to “shine” at Primrose Hill School. *(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 and parents, discussing student work with teachers, reviewing school improvement plan, reviewing classroom assessments)*

Parents play an important role at Primrose Hill. They volunteer in classrooms, participate in PTO and support learning whenever they are asked. Parents value and expect a quality education for their children. District and school administrators, teachers and the SALT team all agree that parent involvement is integral to this school’s success. *(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 school administrator, reviewing school improvement plan, 2004 SALT Survey report)*

Primrose Hill School uses the KITES (Kits in Teaching Elementary Science) program as an effective problem-solving tool. The hands-on activities spark curiosity and inquiry-based learning about various science topics. Many students say that science is their favorite subject because they get to do things they have never done before. One student reports, “I get to observe, experiment and hold crayfish!” While teachers incorporate social studies into their daily activities, lessons and projects, a district-wide coordinated social studies curriculum is noticeably missing. District administrators report that they are now in the final phase of developing a district-wide social studies curriculum. *(following students, observing classes, meeting with district administrators, talking with students and teachers, Primrose Hill SALT binder)*

Commendations for Primrose Hill School

- Mutual respect at all levels
- A commitment to high expectations
- Child centered environment
- Embedded professional development
- Shared responsibility and accountability

Recommendations for Primrose Hill School

Review action steps of the school improvement plan for changes in student learning and teaching behaviors. Specifically state what students and teachers need to do to achieve the results.

Extend the success of the Response to Intervention process by continuing to refine it to meet the needs of every student.

Continue to provide input into district-wide decisions keeping your focus on the needs of Primrose Hill students.

Continue to expand and enhance school-wide enrichment opportunities.

Continue parent involvement to assist with student learning. Regularly communicate with parents about student progress, programs, academic expectations and school activities.

Commendations for the Barrington School District

- Trust and respect for teachers
- Targeted, coordinated professional development
- Teacher Appraisal Program

Recommendations for Barrington School District

Complete and implement the district-wide social studies curriculum. Fund the necessary materials to support that curriculum.

7. FINAL ADVICE TO PRIMROSE HILL SCHOOL

Primrose Hill School is like a symphony. All stakeholders play individual parts and come together to make beautiful music. Teachers, as well as students, orchestrate learning, fostering responsibility, independence and curiosity. You have created a special community here that needs continued nourishment to grow.

The School Improvement Team conveyed our thoughts perfectly when they said, “Primrose Hill is a work in progress, and we hope it never stops.” Take those words seriously, and continue to make instructional decisions based upon the needs of your students. Let the high regard and expectations you have for learning inspire and push you forward. There is always more to do.

You are about to begin the search for new leadership, at both the school and district levels. Change is inevitable, but your openness to new ideas and willingness to communicate will serve you well during this transition.

“You can learn

Yes you can

Many, many things if you want to!”

--Lyrics from Town Meeting song

ENDORSEMENT OF SALT VISIT TEAM REPORT

Primrose Hill School

March 10, 2006

How SALT visit reports are endorsed

The Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) contracts with Catalpa Ltd. to monitor all SALT school visits and to examine each SALT visit team report to determine whether it should be endorsed as a legitimate SALT school visit report. Catalpa Ltd. monitors the preparations for the visit, the actual conduct of the visit and the post-visit preparation of the final report. This includes observing the team at work, maintaining close contact with the chair during the visit and archiving all of the documents associated with a visit. Catalpa Ltd. carefully reviews the text of the final report to make sure that the conclusions and the report itself meet their respective tests at a satisfactory level. The endorsement decision is based on the procedures and criteria specified in *Protocol for Catalpa Ltd. Endorsement of SALT School Visit Reports*².

The *SALT Visit Protocol*, which describes the purposes, procedures and standards for the conduct of the SALT school visit, is the basis for report endorsement. The SALT visit protocol is based upon the principles and procedures of *Practice-based Inquiry*^{®3} that are based on a 160-year-old tradition of peer visits that governments and accreditation agencies continue to use to assess the performance of schools.

The *SALT Visit Protocol*⁴ requires that all SALT visits be conducted at an exceptionally high standard of rigor. Yet, because visits are “real-life” interactive events, it is impossible to control all of the unexpected circumstances that might arise. Nevertheless most of the unexpected things that happen do not challenge the legitimacy of the visit. Teams and schools adapt well to most surprises and maintain the rigor of the visit inquiry.

Catalpa Ltd. made its judgment decision about the legitimacy of this report by collecting evidence from the conduct of this visit to answer 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 that are specified in the visit protocol? (Are the conclusions important, accurate and set in present, do they show the team’s judgment?)

Does the report meet the tests for a report that are specified in the visit protocol? (Is the report fair, useful, and persuasive of productive action?)

² See *The Handbook for Chairs of the SALT School Visit, 2nd Edition*. This handbook includes the SALT Visit Protocol and many guidance documents for chairs, schools and RIDE. It is available from the SALT Project Office and Catalpa.

³ Practice-Based Inquiry[®] is a registered trademark of Catalpa Ltd.

⁴ See *The Foundations of Practice-Based Inquiry*[®] (2006, Catalpa Ltd.) and *Practice-based Inquiry*[®] *Guide to protocol design*. (2006, Catalpa Ltd.)

The sources of evidence that Catalpa used for this review were: (These are the steps tailored for each visit.)

Discussion with the chair, the school and the RIDE project director about issues related to the visit before it began.

Daily discussion with the visit chair about possible endorsement issues as they arose during the visit.

Observation of a portion of this visit.

Discussion with the principal at the end of the visit regarding any concerns he/she had about the visit.

Thorough review of the report in both its pre-release and final forms.

The Endorsement Decision

The conduct of the Primrose Hill School visit did not raise any issues of note.

Catalpa Ltd. fully endorses the legitimacy of this report and its conclusions.

The points that support this are compelling:

1. RIDE has certified that this team meets the RIDE requirements for team membership.
2. The conduct of the visit by both team and school was in reasonable accord with the SALT School Visit Protocol.
3. There is no methodological or other, reason to believe that the findings of this report do not represent the full corporate judgment of a trained team of peers led by a certified chair.
4. The conclusions meet the established tests for conclusions. They are important, supported by evidence from practice, set in the present, and they show the team's judgment.
5. The report meets the criteria for a report. It is fair, persuasive and potentially useful to the school.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Wilson".

Thomas A. Wilson, Ed.D.

Catalpa Ltd.

March 29, 2006

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 Primrose Hill 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 Primrose Hill School.

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

- ◆ *observing classes directly*
- ◆ *observing the school outside of the classroom*
- ◆ *following 7 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 Primrose Hill School
 - district strategic plan
 - 2005 SALT Survey report
 - classroom textbooks
 - 2005 Information Works!
 - 2004 New Standards Reference Examination School Summaries
 - School and District Report Cards

Barrington Public Schools Professional Development Handbook
Benchmark Papers from Writing Prompts
Barrington Public Schools Essential Literacy Assessment
Grade 3 Exemplars, Problem solving, communication and assessment
Learning Walk Guidebook
Physical Education Program
Barrington District Math Assessments
Barrington Public Schools Teacher Appraisal Program
Barrington Public Schools Teacher Appraisal binder
District Binder for Collegial Support and Mentor Program
Home/School Communication binder
Emergency Policies
Grade Level Meeting Notes for grades K-3
Classroom Spreadsheets for assessment data
Response to Intervention/PLP Support binder
School Improvement Team records
Programs Enriching All Kids binder
Primrose Hill School PTO Activities 2005-2006
Primrose Hill SALT binder

State Assessment Results for Primrose Hill School

Report Card for Primrose Hill School

In 2005, schools were classified by their attendance rate. Using this measure, this report card describes Primrose Hill School as making adequate yearly progress.

The 2004 Report Card shows the performance of Primrose Hill School compared to the school's annual measurable objectives (AMO). This report card describes Primrose Hill School as a high performing and sustaining school.

Index Proficiency Score, 2002-04	English Language Arts Target score: 76.1				MATHEMATICS Target score: 61.7			
Student Group	this School	Target Met?	this District	thE State	this School	Target Met?	this District	thE State
All Students	99.5	YES	95.2	86.1	91.8	YES	88.8	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	99.7	YES	89.5	88.5	91.9	YES	89	82
Students with Disabilities	*	YES	81.2	69.5	*	YES	79.8	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	98.9	YES	99.7	99.4

Attendance Rate	Target: 90%			
	this school	target met?	THIS DISTRICT	the state
	95.5	YES	96.1	94.8

<http://192.168.3.60/reportcard/04/rc.asp?schCode=01103&grade=04&grade1=04> (1 of 2)/2/27/2006 7:52:19 AM RI School Report Card

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

this school is classified as:

High Performing and Sustaining

THE PRIMROSE HILL SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT TEAM

Betty Durfee
Principal

Monique Eaton
Staff Member

Mary Frank
Community Member

Betsy Hubbard
Grade 1 Teacher

Kim Jacobs
Parent

Marilyn Packard-Luther
SIT Chair
Grade 3 Teacher

Pam Poirier
Grade 2 Teacher

Kathy Rywolt
Parent

Paula Sigal
Speech Pathologist

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

Susan Adamo
Grade 3 Teacher
Frenchtown Elementary School
East Greenwich, Rhode Island

Edie Dunn
Principal
Fishing Cove Elementary School
North Kingstown, Rhode Island

Maria F. Duquette
Grade 1 Teacher
Western Coventry Elementary School
Coventry, Rhode Island

Kenny Duva
Special Educator
Quidnessett Elementary School
North Kingstown, Rhode Island

Mary Leyden
Grade K-1 Looping Teacher
Blackrock Elementary School
Coventry, Rhode Island

Jackie Weber
Librarian
Alan Shawn Feinstein School
Margaret I. Robertson School
Central Falls, Rhode Island

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR MEMBERS OF VISIT TEAM

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