



Dr. Earl F. Calcutt Middle School

CENTRAL FALLS

THE SALT VISIT TEAM REPORT

January 13, 2006



School Accountability for Learning and Teaching (SALT)

The school accountability program of the Rhode Island Department of Education

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CONTENTS

1.	INTRODUCTION	1
	THE PURPOSE AND LIMITS OF THIS REPORT	1
	SOURCES OF EVIDENCE	2
	USING THE REPORT	2
2.	PROFILE OF DR. EARL F. CALCUTT MIDDLE SCHOOL	4
3.	PORTRAIT OF DR. EARL F. CALCUTT MIDDLE SCHOOL AT THE TIME OF THE VISIT	5
4.	FINDINGS ON STUDENT LEARNING	6
	CONCLUSIONS	6
	IMPORTANT THEMATIC FINDINGS IN STUDENT LEARNING	7
5.	FINDINGS ON TEACHING FOR LEARNING	8
	CONCLUSIONS	8
	COMMENDATIONS FOR DR. EARL F. CALCUTT MIDDLE SCHOOL	10
	RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DR. EARL F. CALCUTT MIDDLE SCHOOL	10
	RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CENTRAL FALLS SCHOOL DEPARTMENT	10
6.	FINDINGS ON SCHOOL SUPPORT FOR LEARNING AND TEACHING	11
	CONCLUSIONS	11
	COMMENDATIONS FOR DR. EARL F. CALCUTT MIDDLE SCHOOL	14
	RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DR. EARL F. CALCUTT MIDDLE SCHOOL	14
	RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CENTRAL FALLS SCHOOL DEPARTMENT	14
7.	FINAL ADVICE TO DR. EARL F. CALCUTT MIDDLE SCHOOL	15
	ENDORSEMENT OF SALT VISIT TEAM REPORT	16
	REPORT APPENDIX	18
	SOURCES OF EVIDENCE FOR THIS REPORT	18
	STATE ASSESSMENT RESULTS FOR CALCUTT MIDDLE SCHOOL	20
	THE DR. EARL F. CALCUTT MIDDLE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT TEAM	24
	MEMBERS OF THE SALT VISIT TEAM	25
	CODE OF CONDUCT FOR MEMBERS OF VISIT TEAM	26

1. INTRODUCTION

The Purpose and Limits of This Report

This is the report of the SALT team that visited Dr. Earl F. Calcutt Middle School from January 9 - 13, 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 Dr. Earl F. Calcutt Middle School?

How well does the teaching at Dr. Earl F. Calcutt Middle School affect learning?

How well does Dr. Earl F. Calcutt 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 Dr. Earl F. Calcutt 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, 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 116 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 60.25 hours interviewing faculty, administration 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 30.5 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 Dr. Earl F. Calcutt 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 Central Falls 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 Central Falls School Department, RIDE and the public should consider what the report says or implies about how they can best support Dr. Earl F. Calcutt 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 DR. EARL F. CALCUTT MIDDLE SCHOOL

Dr. Earl F. Calcutt Middle School is located in Central Falls, Rhode Island, and is part of the Central Falls School Department. Currently, a seven-member board of trustees, which was instituted by the Rhode Island Department of Education and the state legislature, governs the Central Falls School Department. Calcutt Middle School was built in 1975, housing students in grades four through six. During the 1998-1999 school year, an addition to the building was constructed to accommodate more students and support grade realignment. The project was completed in time for the 1999-2000 school year, and since then the school has housed students in grades six through eight.

Of the 876 students who attend Calcutt Middle School, 68 percent are Hispanic, 22 percent are white, 10 percent are African-American, and less than one percent are Asian-Pacific Islanders. Twenty-eight percent of the students receive English as a Second Language services. Twenty-seven percent receive special education services. Eighty percent of the students qualify for free or reduced-price meals.

One principal and one assistant principal administer the school. Sixty-nine full-time teachers, five full-time substitute teachers, three guidance counselors, a librarian and a nurse comprise the faculty. Two behavior specialists, one full-time and one part-time school social worker, a psychologist, one full-time and one part-time speech pathologist, a diagnostic-prescriptive teacher, and a school resource officer comprise the support staff. Seventeen teacher assistants, five secretaries and six custodians also serve the students, faculty and staff at Calcutt.

Calcutt Middle School is organized as a Title I school and identifies itself as espousing the *Turning Points* philosophy for middle schools to build effective classroom instruction and teacher-student relationships. The school uses a flexible block schedule, and students and teachers are grouped by teams. Literacy and mathematics coaches are available to assist teachers in the classroom and to support the improvement of instruction and the implementation of Grade Level Expectations.

Several programs and initiatives have been established at Calcutt to support students and their learning. A READ 180 laboratory was added to the school to provide intensive reading support for students who read below grade level. The school uses a home-school liaison to attempt to connect families to the school, as well as to support a newly formed parent teacher organization. The Children's Crusade and SCOPE (School and Community Organized to Promote Excellence in School program) provide enrichment activities for students including visits to colleges, homework clubs, music classes, sports, chess, and arts and crafts. The school provides a Truancy court, a 'level II behavior room' and a student support center to help students improve and maintain appropriate attendance and behavior.

3. PORTRAIT OF DR. EARL F. CALCUTT MIDDLE SCHOOL AT THE TIME OF THE VISIT

Calcutt Middle School is a school with great spirit and potential. This well-kept, though severely crowded, school welcomes more than 850 students each day. The students are polite and friendly and enjoy coming to Calcutt. When asked, they say they feel safe and cared for by the teachers, administrators, and staff. Most appreciate their teachers and have high hopes for their learning and future aspirations. Many students, however, do not achieve at grade appropriate levels, and in some classes, students do not behave as well as they should.

Most teachers enjoy working at Calcutt and greatly appreciate the support and collaboration of their colleagues. Many embrace the significant changes occurring at this school and are working to implement them. The faculty and staff truly care for their students and say that they recognize the many challenges they face. Some teachers plan and provide excellent instruction that engages their students and helps them learn, grow and achieve. However, in many cases, this compassion of teachers works as a “double-edged sword” and distracts teachers from holding students to high expectations for learning and behavior in their classes.

The administrators work well with the support staff to serve the needs of both students and teachers. Together with the faculty they are working to create a spirit of cooperation to implement changes to make student learning the number one priority for all. The principal is energetic and has a strong desire and vision to move the school forward. While many faculty and staff are on board with this vision, some hesitate, concerned that the intended change will not come to fruition.

There are several significant challenges that beset this school and impact all members of its community. The school is severely overcrowded. Personnel and material resources are in short supply. Not all content areas have curricula. There are inadequate mechanisms to provide necessary professional development to teachers or ensure consistent effective instruction in all classes. Confusion exists over how discipline is implemented. Most important, too many students do not achieve at grade appropriate levels. While notable work has already begun, much remains to be done.

4. FINDINGS ON STUDENT LEARNING

Conclusions

Students write at varied levels of proficiency; yet most do not write well. While students say that writing in school will “help them get better,” they do not write enough in all of their classes to improve. A few have clear knowledge of the structure and purpose for writing. These students know how to develop main ideas, use effective organization and support their ideas with details. They also can effectively record information and respond to specific prompts and questions. Students, who do not write well, write the minimal amount that is required of them or not at all. Sometimes what they write is incoherent. These students often just write without giving thought to completing their assignments. They do not use the writing process to develop their ideas or do not have the motivation to write well. Most students throughout the school do not know or use proper writing conventions. *(following students, observing classes, talking with students and teachers, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, discussing student work with teachers, reviewing classroom assessments, 2004 New Standards Reference Examination School Summaries, 2003 Rhode Island Writing Assessment results)*

Reading is enjoyable for some students, but a task for many. Some students read well; most read poorly; and some read significantly below grade level. Some students can easily decode words, effectively understand and discuss texts, and enjoy reading. Students, who do not read well, lack comprehension skills and only partially understand what they read. They also lack fluency in their oral reading and struggle to pronounce and decode words. Students do not read well because of language barriers and because reading materials are insufficient, not appropriate or lack content that interests them. Many students say that they do not like to read and do so only if they must. Most students do not read enough longer texts for sustained periods of time, but primarily read worksheets, directions and short prompts in their classes. *(following students, observing classes, talking with students and teachers, discussing student work with teachers, meeting with students and parents, classroom textbooks, 2005 Information Works!, 2004 New Standards Reference Examination School Summaries)*

Most students cannot problem solve independently or successfully, while a few possess the ability and strategies to do so. The few students, who problem solve well, work effectively, independently or in groups to develop their thinking with graphic organizers. They test possible solutions, use a variety of resources, and evaluate and explain how they arrived at a solution. The majority of students, however, seek the easy way out. When they are confronted with a problem, a new situation or a task that requires them to take the initiative and think critically, they raise their hands and ask for help. Some wait to be given the answer; some give up after minimal effort; and some do nothing at all. While students say they want more hands-on, fun and challenging activities, most lack the strategies, skills and confidence to attempt these activities when they are presented. *(following students, observing classes, talking with students and teachers, meeting with students and parents, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, discussing student work with teachers, reviewing classroom assessments, 2004 New Standards Reference Examination School Summaries)*

Most students come to school daily and say they like their school and their teachers. They are polite, respectful and friendly. They are eager to learn, want to be challenged and express high aspirations for themselves. Students say they like and appreciate their classes. They respond to teachers who have clear expectations for learning and achievement and who hold them accountable. However, most students do not know or do what is required to succeed academically because they are not consistently held to high standards. Many do not grow academically but remain at their current performance levels because they put little effort into their work and know how to get by and meet these low expectations. (*following students, observing classes, observing the school outside of the classroom, meeting with students, district administrators, and parents, talking with students and teachers, discussing student work with teachers, reviewing classroom assessments, 2005 Information Works!*)

Students say they are safe at this school. While there is some typical jostling and horseplay in the halls and other common areas, this is not excessive. However, student behavior in classrooms varies greatly. Some students are on task from the beginning of class to the end, while others consistently misbehave. In some classes, this misbehavior becomes contagious and dominates the room. Students say this misbehavior hurts their learning. Some say they are able to tune it out, while others cannot overcome the distraction and disengage. (*following students, observing classes, observing the school outside of the classroom, meeting with students and parents, talking with students and teachers, reviewing completed and ongoing student work*)

Important Thematic Findings in Student Learning

Students:

- ◆ *Like their school and teachers*
- ◆ *Read, write and problem solve at varying levels of proficiency*
- ◆ *Are eager to learn and want to be challenged*
- ◆ *Crave structure and respond to teachers who have clear expectations*
- ◆ *Know behavior impacts their learning*

5. FINDINGS ON TEACHING FOR LEARNING

Conclusions

Teachers inconsistently and infrequently teach students how to write well across all teams and content areas. They say they know that they do not have their students write enough, but they also say that students have limited writing skills and that “getting students to write is like pulling teeth.” Some teachers, however, motivate their students to write well. They have students share their work with others and provide them with strategies such as models for success, brainstorming, graphic organizers and criteria charts. Less effective teachers only assign topics; they do not teach their students how to organize their thoughts or revise and improve their work. They seldom explicitly teach or reinforce proper writing conventions, the writing process and strategies of effective writing or require students to write longer pieces. Many teachers require students only to express their ideas in journals or to write short answer responses or rough drafts. *(following students, observing classes, meeting with students and parents, 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, reviewing district and school policies and practices)*

Many teachers do not teach reading well, while most do not teach students how to read at all. Further, many teachers state that teaching reading is the responsibility of reading teachers only, despite the fact that students are unable to read well in all classes. Some teach reading well by teaching students strategies for comprehending texts such as highlighting important information, paraphrasing, using context clues, sequencing, predicting and connecting to prior knowledge. They also model fluency, expression and comprehension by reading aloud with their students. Many teachers, however, do not explicitly teach reading strategies, allowing students to struggle with texts. They do not provide corrective feedback when students have difficulty. They also do not provide time for students to use reading strategies or hold students accountable for their reading. Throughout the school, teachers do not provide enough opportunities for students to practice and improve their reading. *(following students, observing classes, meeting with students, parents and district administrators, talking with students, teachers and school administrators, reviewing school improvement plan, classroom textbooks, reviewing district and school policies and practices)*

Most teachers do not teach problem solving well. A few teachers teach students to problem solve effectively by breaking problems into parts, making predictions, formulating strategies and evaluating different solutions. However, most teachers do not share a common understanding of problem solving and know how to connect it to their lessons. These teachers do not explicitly teach problem solving strategies, critical thinking skills or how to test solutions. They do not require students to take the time to struggle when challenged. They often acquiesce to student frustration and provide the answers, rather than let their students work out problems for themselves and learn from their mistakes. While teachers say that they help students solve problems—like getting along with their friends and communicating across languages—they do not incorporate such problem solving into their subject areas. *(following students, observing classes, observing the school outside of the classroom, meeting with students, school administrators and parents, talking with students, teachers and school administrators, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, discussing student work with teachers, reviewing school improvement plan, classroom textbooks, reviewing district and school policies and practices)*

Some teachers hold students to high expectations for learning. These teachers provide rigorous instruction in a structured environment in which they hold students accountable. They let students know that they are there to succeed, and they will do whatever is necessary to help them achieve. Many teachers, however, do not. They fail to set high academic expectations for their students. Teachers care for their students and say that students have many challenges to overcome outside of school, and this focuses their attention on the safety and comfort of students, rather than on their learning. As a result, their compassion is a “double-edged sword.” Most teachers do not provide instruction necessary for students to achieve at high standards and to reach their future aspirations. *(following students, observing classes, observing the school outside of the classroom, meeting with students, school and district administrators, and parents, talking with students, teachers and school administrators, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, discussing student work with teachers, reviewing classroom assessments, 2004 SALT Survey report, Initial Observational Walk-through of Calcutt Middle School Using the Turning Points Benchmarks)*

The quality of instruction is inconsistent. It varies in enthusiasm, challenge and preparedness. Some teachers provide excellent instruction and organized and challenging lessons. They communicate clear purposes for learning, encourage all students to participate, give students effective feedback and regularly incorporate higher order thinking activities. They positively interact with students and routinely monitor their learning. Learning is the only option in these classrooms. Many other teachers, however, are not prepared for their classes and do not provide an organized and stimulating learning environment. They do not deliver structured or meaningful lessons, communicate a purpose for learning or give students effective feedback. They do not use their classroom time efficiently or require all students to stay on task, and they allow some students to do nothing. Too many rely on teacher-talk as the primary vehicle to instruct. They do not meet the needs of all learners and do not regularly incorporate reading, writing and problem solving into their lessons. These teachers do not hold themselves accountable for student learning. It is not surprising that in these classes behavior problems regularly occur. *(following students, observing classes, observing the school outside of the classroom, meeting with students, school and district administrators, and parents, talking with students, teachers and school administrators, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, discussing student work with teachers, reviewing classroom assessments, 2004 SALT Survey report)*

The quality of classroom management varies significantly. Some teachers effectively manage their classrooms. They establish and communicate clear and firm rules and cultivate mutual respect. They require order in their classes and engage all students and keep them on task. They also create a stimulating environment and vary their methods of instruction to meet the diverse learning styles of their students. Misbehavior is not an option in these classrooms. Many teachers, however, have poor to merely adequate classroom management, and learning suffers as a result. Behavior in these classes ranges from moderately disruptive to chaotic. Typical behavior includes students using inappropriate and offensive language, students wandering around, objects being thrown, and students showing disrespect towards other students and their teachers. Rather than correct this misbehavior, some teachers issue empty threats; some ignore it; some try to teach around it; and others do not know what to do. *(following students, observing classes, observing the school outside of the classroom, meeting with students, school and district administrators, and parents, talking with students, teachers, parent, and school administrators, reviewing district and school policies and practices)*

Commendations for Dr. Earl F. Calcutt Middle School

- ◆ *Teachers' care for their students and high regard for their safety and comfort*
- ◆ *Some teachers' high expectations for learning*
- ◆ *Some teachers' excellent instruction*
- ◆ *Some teachers' effective classroom management*

Recommendations for Dr. Earl F. Calcutt Middle School

- ◆ *Set high academic expectations for all students.*
- ◆ *Increase the quality and consistency of instruction in all classes.*
- ◆ *Explicitly and routinely teach reading, writing and problem solving strategies in all classes.*
- ◆ *Require all students to behave appropriately in all classes.*
- ◆ *Support all learning styles with varied, appropriate and challenging lessons in a stimulating environment.*
- ◆ *Design lessons that require students to use higher order thinking skills and actively engage in learning.*
- ◆ *Share and utilize the expertise of effective teachers to improve teaching.*
- ◆ *Seek professional development for incorporating reading, writing and problem solving into all content areas.*
- ◆ *Seek professional development for effective classroom management.*

Recommendations for Central Falls School Department

- ◆ *Assist teachers in setting and embracing high academic expectations for all students.*
- ◆ *Provide professional development for teachers to incorporate reading, writing and problem solving in all classes.*
- ◆ *Provide professional development for teachers to effectively manage their classes.*

6. FINDINGS ON SCHOOL SUPPORT FOR LEARNING AND TEACHING

Conclusions

This is a friendly, safe and welcoming school that is undergoing significant change, and most importantly, it appears to be on the right track. Students, teachers, administrators and staff enjoy coming here. They feel a sense of community. Most interact well and respect one another. Low expectations for student learning, however, are pervasive and limit the achievement and aspirations of many students. Several major change initiatives are being implemented to try to improve this school. These include making students' needs the primary focus in all decisions and embracing a true middle school philosophy by adopting the Turning Points model. These changes hold great promise, but they are in their infancy. *(following students, observing classes, observing the school outside of the classroom, meeting with the school improvement team, students, school and district administrators, and parents, talking with students, teachers and school administrators, discussing student work with teachers, reviewing school improvement plan, 2004 SALT Survey report)*

This school is severely challenged by inadequate space and the lack of resources. Many classes are overcrowded. Teachers teach in closet-sized rooms, the library and the cafeteria. Some teachers travel on carts, and some physical education students are periodically bused to a nearby community center due to dangerous overcrowding in the gym. Special educators also say that they do not have available space to work with small groups of students. There are insufficient material and personnel resources, as well. Inadequate material resources include limited access to working technology, a limited number of textbooks, which requires teachers to borrow from other districts, and limited basic supplies, such as copy paper. There are very few books for students to read in their classes, and teachers must purchase supplies such as paper and science consumables. Some special needs students are not receiving federally mandated services due to a shortage of personnel. The limited number of non-core subject teachers prevents all students from receiving a well-rounded education. *(following students, observing classes, observing the school outside of the classroom, meeting with the school improvement team, students, school and district administrators, and parents, talking with students, teachers and school administrators, reviewing classroom textbooks)*

The administrators work well as a team to lead this school. They recognize the need to raise school-wide expectations for student learning and to improve the consistency and quality of instruction and classroom management, and they recognize that this work remains incomplete. The principal is new and energetic, and she has a vision for the future. She has introduced new student-centered policies and programs such as Turning Points, inclusion, a flexible block schedule, reorganizing teams to include encore teachers, and the restructuring of the In School Support Center. While these are having a positive effect upon students, many teachers do not yet understand, welcome or fully embrace these changes. Some teachers express concern that they do not have input in the decision-making process, and others say these changes are ineffectively communicated. Other leadership structures such as team leaders and the School Improvement Team are newly in place and are still a work in progress. *(observing the school outside of the classroom, meeting with the school improvement team, students, school and district administrators, and parents, talking with students, teachers and school administrators, reviewing school improvement plan, reviewing district and school policies and practices)*

This is a safe school. Most students are well behaved in common areas and during the periods between classes. Administrators, teachers, staff and the behavior specialists are visible throughout the school day. The In-School Support Center is a valuable tool to de-escalate disruptive behaviors and keep students in school. However, there is widespread confusion and concern about school discipline. Some teachers say that they do not receive feedback from discipline referrals and report that they do not feel that discipline is consistently enforced. The administrators encourage teachers and teams to establish and maintain proper discipline in their classrooms and to use the administrators as a last resort. The administrators also say that they are trying to replace punitive discipline action with mediation and problem solving. *(following students, observing classes, observing the school outside of the classroom, meeting students, school and district administrators, and parents, talking with students, teachers, parent and school administrators, reviewing school improvement plan, 2004 SALT Survey report, reviewing district and school policies and practices)*

There are a variety of programs and models for the delivery of services to special populations. This school has significantly expanded the inclusion model for students with special needs. Many students now receive the benefits of general education curricula and interaction with their peers with the support of both general and special education teachers and assistants. While many teachers say these students are learning more and their negative behaviors are decreasing, they also express concern about the lack of training to implement this model successfully, as well as about its impact on class size. Many self-contained classrooms meet students' needs and promote active learning by implementing the general education curricula and life skills effectively. Students are also well served in most ESL classes. These teachers use multiple teaching strategies successfully to reach their students. They provide stimulating instruction and structured environments that engage all of their students. *(following students, observing classes, observing the school outside of the classroom, meeting with students, school and district administrators, and parents, talking with students and teachers, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, discussing student work with teachers, reviewing school improvement plan, reviewing district and school policies and practices)*

The professional development provided to teachers is insufficient to meet the needs of this school—it is neither focused nor required. Therefore, there are no adequate mechanisms to ensure that all teachers receive consistent training in new and ongoing programs, policies and instructional strategies. Some teachers say the Springboard training in mathematics was beneficial, and more teachers plan to attend these trainings. Some teachers also say that they take advantage of the mathematics and ELA coaches and that this helps and supports their teaching. Unfortunately, not enough teachers make use of this expertise. Many teachers also say that they need more training in areas such as reading, writing and problem solving across content areas, inclusion and differentiated instruction. *(following students, observing classes, observing the school outside of the classroom, meeting with the school improvement team, and school and district administrators, talking with teachers and school administrators, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, discussing student work with teachers, reviewing school improvement plan, reviewing records of professional development reviewing district and school policies and practices)*

Although the district has provided the school with curricula and pacing guides for mathematics and ELA, there are no formal curricula for other subject areas. Many teachers are attempting to implement the mathematics and ELA curricula, and they report frustration and the need for guidance and continued revision. The absence of curricula for other subject areas causes confusion and produces both redundancy and gaps in teaching and learning. This is particularly problematic with the upcoming science assessments. *(following students, observing classes, meeting with the school improvement team, students, district administrators, and parents, talking with students, teachers and school administrators, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, discussing student work with teachers, reviewing classroom assessments, classroom textbooks, reviewing school improvement plan)*

There is insufficient family and community involvement in this school. Teachers say that when parents are called, they will come to school, but teachers wish they were more supportive of education. Parents say this is a safe school for their children; they appreciate having Spanish speakers available to answer the phones and translate, but they wish the school would communicate better with them. Despite efforts to increase their involvement including the use of ConnectEd, the PTO, the School Improvement Team, the work of the home school liaison, and the community walk by Calcutt faculty and staff, families and communities are still not an integral part of this school. *(meeting with the school improvement team, school and district administrators, and parents, talking with students, teachers and school administrators, 2005 SALT Survey report, reviewing school improvement plan)*

Commendations for Dr. Earl F. Calcutt Middle School

- ◆ *Safe and friendly school*
- ◆ *Students, teachers, administrators and staff enjoy coming here*
- ◆ *Energetic leadership with a vision for change*
- ◆ *Effective programs for special populations*

Recommendations for Dr. Earl F. Calcutt Middle School

- ◆ *Involve the entire school community in setting high academic expectations for all students.*
- ◆ *Continue to provide a safe and welcoming environment for students.*
- ◆ *Work with the Central Falls School Department to find additional space, and procure additional material and personnel resources.*
- ◆ *Provide professional development for the teaching of reading, writing, problem solving, inclusion and differentiated instruction.*
- ◆ *Involve faculty, staff and parents in decision-making, and improve communication among them.*
- ◆ *Clarify discipline policy and procedures, and address teachers' concerns about feedback on disciplinary actions.*
- ◆ *Work with the Central Falls School Department to develop and implement curricula in all content areas.*
- ◆ *Utilize the mathematics and ELA coaches more.*
- ◆ *Continue current practices, and develop more effective strategies to increase parental involvement.*
- ◆ *Continue to implement student-centered policies and programs to cultivate a successful middle school environment.*

Recommendations for Central Falls School Department

- ◆ *Work with Calcutt Middle School to quickly find additional space and procure additional material and personnel resources.*
- ◆ *Work with Calcutt Middle School to develop and implement curricula in all content areas.*
- ◆ *Work with Calcutt Middle School to implement student-centered policies and programs to cultivate a successful middle school environment.*
- ◆ *Provide professional development for the teaching of reading, writing, problem solving, inclusion and differentiated instruction.*

7. FINAL ADVICE TO DR. EARL F. CALCUTT MIDDLE SCHOOL

We encourage the faculty, administrators and staff at Calcutt Middle School to grow and become a community dedicated to the belief that all children will learn and achieve at high levels. All stakeholders must collaborate and actively participate in the process of increasing expectations for student learning and provide the rigorous and effective instruction needed to meet this goal.

As a school community, you need to work together to incorporate reading, writing and problem solving throughout all subjects. Set high standards for student learning, and provide consistent, quality instruction and well-managed classrooms. Teach students the skills and strategies that will help them reach their goals. Continue to shift from a teacher-centered to a student-centered school.

From this point forward, the faculty needs to continue to embrace the emerging vision for change so that this school can reach its potential. You have already begun this work. However, reaching your potential will occur only when everyone works together and shares a common vision, philosophy and goal. Celebrate excellence and progress along the way. Student-centered learning and high achievement must become the primary focus of everyone at Calcutt Middle School.

ENDORSEMENT OF SALT VISIT TEAM REPORT

Dr. Earl F. Calcutt Middle School

January 13, 2006

Catalpa Ltd. monitors all SALT visits and examines each SALT visit team report to determine whether it should be endorsed as a legitimate SALT report. The endorsement decision is based on procedures and criteria specified in *Endorsing SALT Visit Team Reports*. (available on Catalpa website). Catalpa Ltd. bases its judgment about the legitimacy of a report on these three questions:

Did the SALT visit team and the host school conduct the visit in a manner that is reasonably consistent with the protocol for the visit?

Do the conclusions of the report meet the tests for conclusions specified in the visit protocol (important, accurate, set in present, shows the team's judgment)?

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

Using the answers to these questions, the final decision to endorse the report answers the overall endorsement question: Is this a legitimate SALT team visit report? In order to make this determination, Catalpa weighs all the questions and issues that have been raised to decide whether a report is legitimate or not. While it is possible that a challenge related to one of the three questions listed above would be serious enough to withhold or condition the endorsement, it is more likely that issues serious enough to challenge a report's legitimacy will cut across the three questions.

While the SALT visit protocol requires that all SALT visits are conducted to an exceptionally high standard of rigor, visits are "real-life" events; it is impossible to control for all unexpected circumstances that might arise. The protocol for the conduct of the visit is spelled out in the *Handbook for SALT Visit Chairs, 1st edition*.

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

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

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

The steps Catalpa completed for this review were:

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

The findings from the review are:

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

Accordingly, Catalpa Ltd. endorses this report.



Thomas A. Wilson, EdD

Catalpa Ltd.

February 2, 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 Dr. Earl F. Calcutt 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 Dr. Earl F. Calcutt 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 10 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 Dr. Earl F. Calcutt Middle 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

Initial Observational Walk-through of Calcutt Middle School Using the Turning Points Benchmarks

Calcutt Middle School Staff Policy Guide

Calcutt Middle School Turning Points “Calcutt Plan” Binder

Calcutt Middle School Grade Level Expectations Binder

Central Falls School District English Language Arts Curriculum Binder

Central Falls School Department Mathematics Curriculum Binder

Central Falls School District Central Office Review for Results and Equity Report

State Assessment Results for Calcutt Middle 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.*

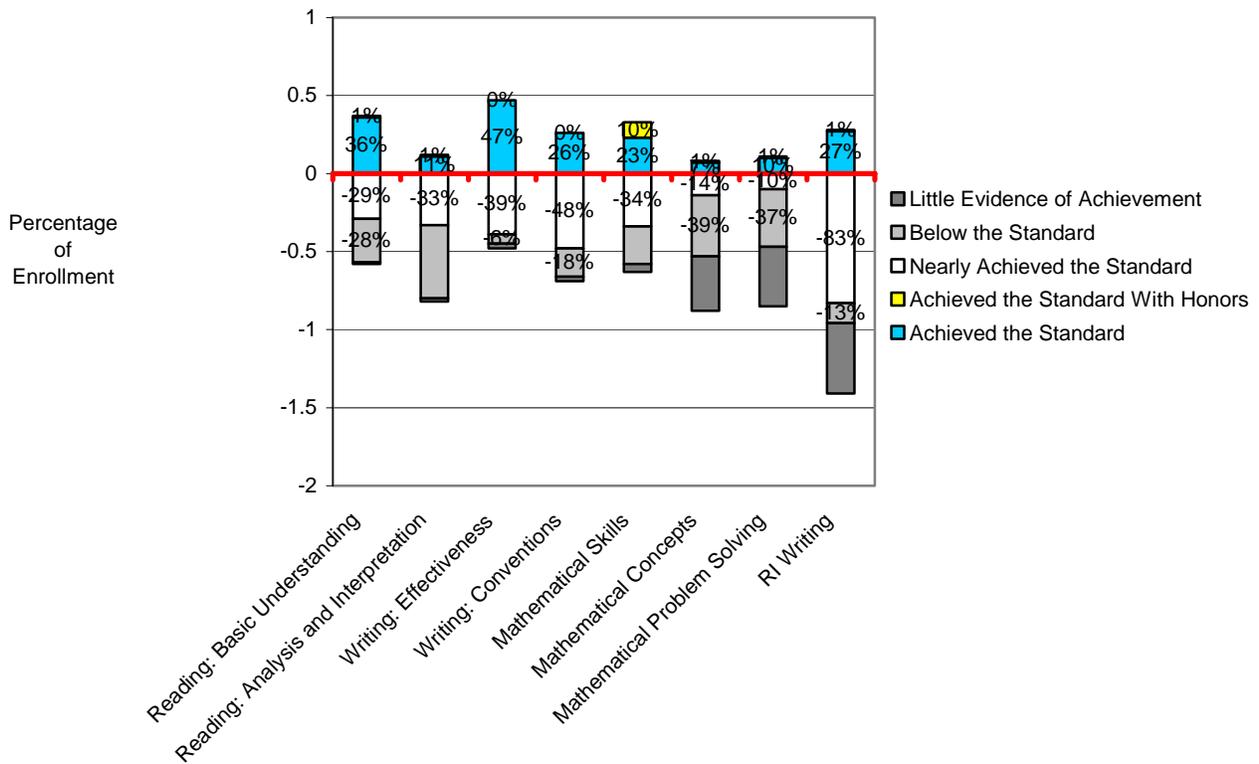
Information Works! data for Calcutt Middle School is available at [/www.infoworks.ride.uri.edu/2005/default.asp](http://www.infoworks.ride.uri.edu/2005/default.asp).

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. 2005 Student Results on Rhode Island State Assessments

Dr. Earl F. Calcutt Middle School State Assessment Results of 2005

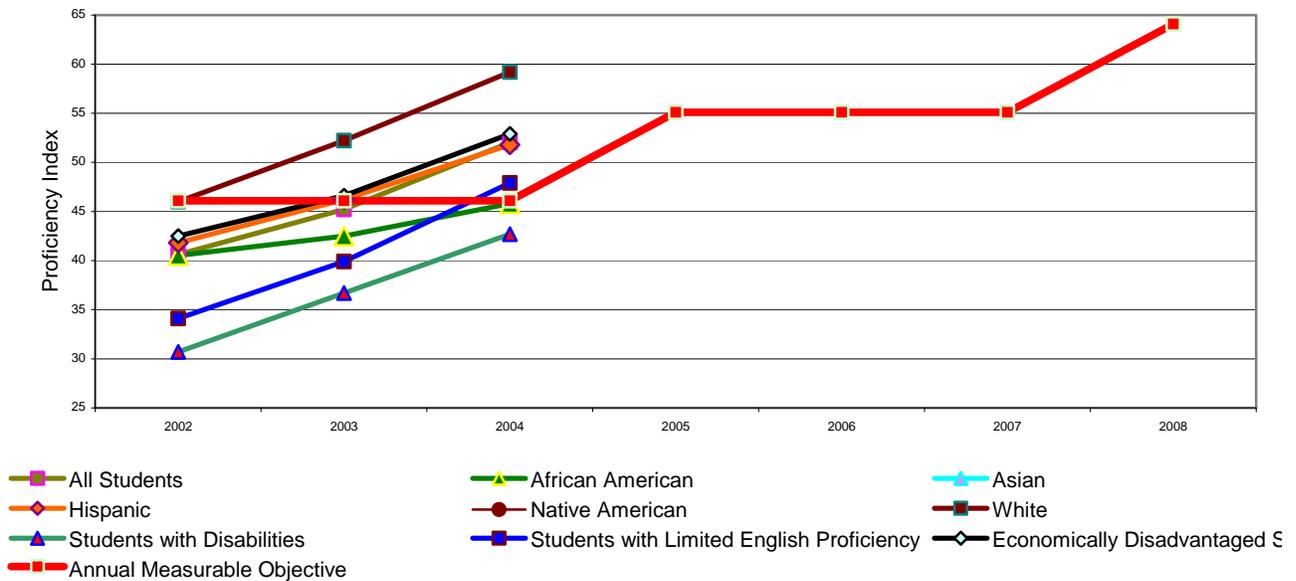


RESULTS ACROSS STUDENT GROUPS WITHIN THE SCHOOL

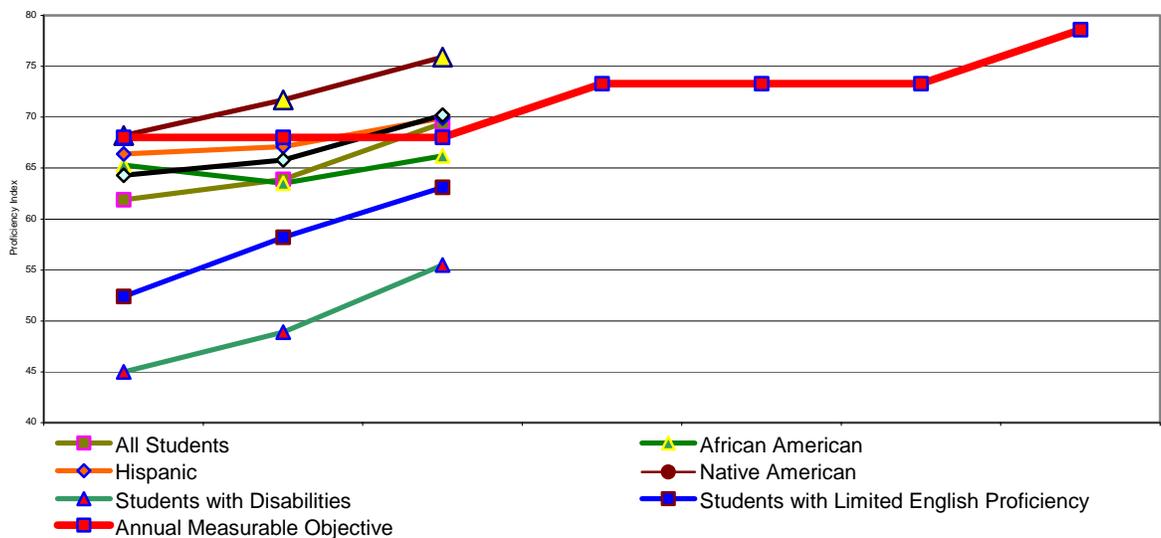
An important way to display student results is across different groups of students in this school who have different characteristics. This display creates information about how well the school meets the learning needs of its various students, in accord with the federal *No Child Left Behind* legislation. To ensure that these smaller groups of students contain enough data to make results accurate, results are based on three years of testing. Any student group whose index scores do not meet targets set by RIDE, require additional attention to close its performance gap.

Table 2 2002-2004 Student Results across Subgroups

Annual Proficiency, Dr. Earl F. Calcutt Middle School, Gr. 8 Math



Annual Proficiency, Dr. Earl F. Calcutt Middle School, ELA, Gr. 8



REPORT CARD FOR CALCUTT MIDDLE SCHOOL

In 2005, schools were classified by their attendance rate. Using this measure, Calcutt Middle School made adequate yearly progress.

The 2004 Report Card shows the performance of Calcutt Middle School compared to the school’s annual measurable objectives (AMO). This report card describes Calcutt Middle School as a Moderately Performing and Improving School.

Index Proficiency Score, 2002-04	English Language Arts Target score: 68				MATHEMATICS Target score: 46.1			
Student Group	this School	Target Met?	this District	thE State	this School	Target Met?	this District	thE State
All Students	69.4	YES	69	80.3	52	YES	51.2	66.5
African Americans	66.2	YES††	66.2	71.2	45.8	YES††	45.6	49.5
Asian	*	YES	*	79.3	*	YES	*	64.9
Hispanic	69.9	YES	69.4	69.5	51.8	YES	50.9	48.8
Native Americans	*	YES	*	76.7	*	YES	*	58.6
White	75.9	YES	74.7	84.4	59.2	YES	58.6	72.8
Students with Disabilities	55.5	YES†	53.9	63.3	42.7	YES†	40.5	46.8
Students with Limited English Proficiency	63.1	YES††	63.1	61	47.9	YES	47.9	43.3
Students who are Economically Disadvantaged	70.2	YES	69.5	70.8	52.9	YES	52	50.9

PERCENT of students tested, 2002-04	Target: 95%			
	this school	target met?	THIS DISTRICT	the state
English Language Arts	97.1	YES	97	98.6
Mathematics	96.6	YES	96.6	98.8

Attendance Rate	Target: 90%			
	this school	target met?	THIS DISTRICT	the state
	91.6	YES	91.6	93.6

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:

**School in Need of Improvement/
Making 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:
 For information on targets and classifications, please see Quick Guide .

THE DR. EARL F. CALCUTT MIDDLE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT TEAM

Ronald Trahan
Chairman

Pauline Beaudreault

Michael Bento

David Bergeron

Trish Bishop

Lee Chagnon

Vanessa Jennison

Robert Klimuszka

Mary Lamoureux

Elizabeth Legault
Principal

Georgeann Lewis

Andrea Payne

Shirley Rodriguez

Amanda Rowley

Maryann Perez

Heather Snow

MEMBERS OF THE SALT VISIT TEAM

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Rhode Island Department of Education
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Regents SALT Fellow
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CODE OF CONDUCT FOR MEMBERS OF VISIT TEAM

INSERT HERE