



Sarah Dyer Barnes School

JOHNSTON

THE SALT VISIT TEAM REPORT

January 27, 2006



School Accountability for Learning and Teaching (SALT)

The school accountability program of the Rhode Island Department of Education

**RHODE ISLAND BOARD OF REGENTS
FOR ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION**

James A. DiPrete, Chairman

Patrick A. Guida, Vice Chairman

Colleen Callahan, Secretary

Amy Beretta

Robert Camara

Frank Caprio

Karin Forbes

Gary E. Grove

Maurice C. Paradis

**RHODE ISLAND DEPARTMENT OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY
EDUCATION**

Peter McWalters, Commissioner

The Board of Regents does not discriminate on the basis of age, color, sex, sexual orientation, race, religion, national origin, or disability.

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

(401) 222-8401

rick.richards@ride.ri.gov

CONTENTS

| | | |
|----|---|----|
| 1. | INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| | THE PURPOSE AND LIMITS OF THIS REPORT | 1 |
| | SOURCES OF EVIDENCE | 2 |
| | USING THE REPORT | 2 |
| 2. | PROFILE OF SARAH DYER BARNES SCHOOL | 4 |
| 3. | PORTRAIT OF SARAH DYER BARNES 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 SARAH DYER BARNES SCHOOL | 10 |
| | RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SARAH DYER BARNES SCHOOL | 10 |
| | RECOMMENDATIONS FOR JOHNSTON SCHOOL DEPARTMENT | 10 |
| 6. | FINDINGS ON SCHOOL SUPPORT FOR LEARNING AND TEACHING | 11 |
| | CONCLUSIONS | 11 |
| | COMMENDATIONS FOR SARAH DYER BARNES SCHOOL | 13 |
| | RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SARAH DYER BARNES SCHOOL | 13 |
| | RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SARAH DYER BARNES SCHOOL PARENT TEACHER ORGANIZATION | 13 |
| | RECOMMENDATIONS FOR JOHNSTON SCHOOL DEPARTMENT | 13 |
| 7. | FINAL ADVICE TO SARAH DYER BARNES SCHOOL | 14 |
| | ENDORSEMENT OF SALT VISIT TEAM REPORT | 15 |
| | REPORT APPENDIX | 17 |
| | SOURCES OF EVIDENCE FOR THIS REPORT | 17 |
| | STATE ASSESSMENT RESULTS FOR SARAH DYER BARNES SCHOOL | 18 |
| | THE SARAH DYER BARNES SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT TEAM | 22 |
| | MEMBERS OF THE SALT VISIT TEAM | 23 |
| | CODE OF CONDUCT FOR MEMBERS OF VISIT TEAM | 24 |

1. INTRODUCTION

The Purpose and Limits of This Report

This is the report of the SALT team that visited Sarah Dyer Barnes School from January 23 through 27, 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 Sarah Dyer Barnes School?

How well does the teaching at Sarah Dyer Barnes School affect learning?

How well does Sarah Dyer Barnes 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 Sarah Dyer Barnes 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 97 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 teachers and staff for a total of 30 hours.

The full visit team built the conclusions, commendations and recommendations presented here through intense and thorough discussion. The team met for a total of 29 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 Sarah Dyer Barnes 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 Johnston 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 Johnston School Department, RIDE and the public should consider what the report says or implies about how they can best support Sarah Dyer Barnes 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 SARAH DYER BARNES SCHOOL

Sarah Dyer Barnes School, one of six elementary schools in the Johnston school system, serves students in grades one through five. The original school structure was built in 1953, with an addition constructed in 1987.

Of the 220 students attending the school, 91% are white, 5% are Hispanic, 1% is black, and 3% are Asian/Pacific Islander. Twenty two percent of students receive special education services, while 64 (29%) receive free or reduced-price lunch.

Sarah Dyer Barnes School employs one administrator, one secretary, 10 regular/special education paraprofessionals, and two custodians. The 25 full and part-time teachers include 10 classroom teachers, one resource teacher, one literacy coach, four special educators, one speech teacher, one psychologist, one nurse, one social worker, one occupational therapist, one art teacher, one music teacher, one physical education teacher, and one librarian. Two teachers are Nationally Board Certified. Currently, there are two classrooms in each grade from grades one through five. Special education includes self-contained, inclusion, and resource classrooms.

Improving writing, reading fluency, and comprehension is the thrust of Sarah Dyer Barnes this year. Students at each grade level take a fall and spring District Writing Assessment. In an effort to improve instruction and learning in literacy, all classroom and support teachers are required to attend professional development in literacy, offered through the Johnston Professional Development Institute. Some faculty also takes part in the Literacy Classroom Initiative (LCI), enabling them to design an intensive literacy unit with full technology integration. These participants receive three Dell computers for their classrooms. Teachers attend other workshops including Creating Rubrics, Techniques of Inclusive Models, Aligning Curriculum with the Grade Level Expectations, Differentiated Instruction, and Autism Spectrum Disorders.

Additionally, improving problem-solving skills is an ongoing goal for Barnes School. Teachers have developed rubrics and criteria for problem solving at most grade levels.

Sarah Dyer Barnes offers the following programs to enhance academics and foster child development: KITES, plays, the daily breakfast program, community service projects, Giving Tree, baskets for needy school community members, and an outreach letter program with Cherry Hill Nursing Home. Further, parents work with the school to provide enrichment and materials. This includes raising funds for programs, fieldtrips, playground equipment, and classroom materials. They sponsor the monthly Friday Fun Night, Movie Night, and Halloween Bingo for staff and families. Additionally, parents publish the yearbook and monthly newsletters.

3. PORTRAIT OF SARAH DYER BARNES SCHOOL AT THE TIME OF THE VISIT

Sarah Dyer Barnes School rests on a dead end street in a residential neighborhood in Johnston, Rhode Island. The red brick, single-level building welcomes students and families. Upon entering the small foyer at the main entrance, one immediately notices the colorful literary and mathematical murals.

The eager and enthusiastic students behave themselves and enjoy coming to school each day. While they write well, their reading and problem solving skills are inconsistent. Not all students are challenged or given choices in how or what they learn. School wide programs and systems to support student learning are inadequate. Special education fails to meet the academic, social, and emotional needs of many of these students.

Many teaching staff are new to the school and/or to their teaching assignments this year. While Sarah Dyer Barnes teachers are dedicated individuals, they have yet to come together as a teaching and learning community. Although they work hard to improve student learning, they lack the appropriate professional development to make school-wide gains. Teaching writing is their strength, while the effectiveness of instruction in reading and problem solving varies from teacher to teacher. The School Improvement Plan, though well written, is not a living document. The new leadership at this school has many areas to address to move this school forward.

4. FINDINGS ON STUDENT LEARNING

Conclusions

Students at Sarah Dyer Barnes School read with varying levels of success. All students read a wide variety of books. Students who read well here know how to apply strategies to help them understand what they read. For example, they sound out words, use picture clues, skip words and go back, employ context clues, and look for smaller words in bigger words. The good readers also use mental images to help them follow the story and remember details. They analyze text—exploring the motivation of characters and applying cause and effect to historical events. Students also make reasonable predictions and ask themselves or partners questions about what they are reading. These students actively participate in reading circles, orally reading their work to their classmates, and use appropriate intonation when they read out loud. In a few classes, they make meaningful contributions to discussions by citing information from their reading when prompted by their teachers. Some students read less well. These children often become stuck when they hit an unfamiliar or difficult word. Further, they often do not understand the purpose of their reading activities. Sometimes, they fail to correct their own reading errors, leading to confusion in comprehending the text. Their goal is to read the words from point A to point B. During reading time, these children too often put their heads down, talk to their classmates, or wander aimlessly around the classroom. Students say they enjoy reading. They take books to one another and recommend that their friends read them! *(following students, observing classes, talking with students, teachers, and parents, meeting with students and parents, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, 2004 New Standards Reference Examination School Summaries, reviewing school improvement plan)*

Writing is a strength of Sarah Dyer Barnes students, and they write quite well. Their writing improves as they move from grade to grade. By fifth grade, their writing is downright impressive. These students clearly articulate what makes good writing good. When SALT team members ask them what makes good writing good, students say good writers use strong word choice, edit and revise, look back, include the author's voice, and reread their work. They know how to use rubrics effectively to guide and improve their writing. Students effectively write to inform, persuade, entertain, and express themselves. They use transition words like first, next, then, and finally to explain steps clearly in their procedural pieces. Students choose interesting words and creative ideas to persuade their audience, for example, when trying to convince readers to buy their created snowmen. They know how to include literary devices such as similes, onomatopoeia, and personification to make their writing entertaining and interesting. They write profound poems that convey strong emotions in few words. Students employ various resources such as textbooks, the internet, and classroom library books to generate ideas and facts for informational reports on the colonial period, the Titanic, and basketball, among others. Of great importance, students see themselves as authors and actually enjoy writing. They do say they wish they could more often choose the topics for their writing. *(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, discussing student work with teachers, reviewing classroom assessments, reviewing school improvement plan, 2004 New Standards Reference Examination School Summaries)*

Although teachers report that their students are good problem solvers, Sarah Dyer Barnes students most often solve basic word problems that require only straightforward computation. Their computation skills are strong and noteworthy. Students independently select and use appropriate strategies when they solve these word problems. They make tables and graphs, draw pictures, start at the end of a problem and work backwards, and create number sentences to arrive at correct solutions. Their written and oral explanations include appropriate mathematical language and clearly outline the steps they took to reach their solutions. Hence, they do competently solve these problems. The SALT team agrees with the preponderance of students who say that the problems they solve are too easy. Students in only a few classes solve challenging, multi-step problems. For example, they use their “salaries” and nutritional guidelines to purchase food from the current supermarket circular. Other students use their knowledge of corners and sides to determine the shape of their classroom, and prove their answer by counting floor tiles. These students apply their learned problem solving strategies to new, interesting situations. *(following students, observing classes, observing the school outside of the classroom, meeting with the school improvement team and students, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, reviewing school improvement plan, reviewing district strategic plan, 2004 New Standards Reference Examination School Summaries, reviewing classroom textbooks, reviewing district and school policies and practices)*

Sarah Dyer Barnes students are enthusiastic and well behaved, with a positive attitude toward their school and their learning. They say learning is important to grow up, make money, go to college, and survive in the world. They are eager to share and communicate their work and learning with others, and they adeptly do so. In classrooms, they follow routines and rules, raise their hands, and treat one another with respect. These students are organized and easily find the materials and work they need, making the most of their available learning time. Students state they want more challenges and choices. They are capable of more rigorous learning. *(following students, observing classes, observing the school outside of the classroom, meeting with students, school administrators, and parents, talking with students, teachers, and parents, 2005 SALT Survey report)*

Important Thematic Findings in Student Learning

Students:

- ◆ *Are ready and willing for greater learning challenges*
- ◆ *Want more choice in their learning*
- ◆ *Effectively use strategies to read, write, and solve word problems*
- ◆ *Adeptly employ rubrics and criteria charts to monitor and improve their work*
- ◆ *Write across the curriculum*
- ◆ *Are respectful and supportive of one another*

5. FINDINGS ON TEACHING FOR LEARNING

Conclusions

The effectiveness of reading instruction varies from classroom to classroom. Teachers report that they have been told to do “guided reading,” but they say they have not received adequate training or the necessary leveled books to do that. Hence, guided reading looks different from teacher to teacher. The effective teachers teach specific skills and strategies designed to meet the individual needs of each student in the small group. They expect and require the other students in the classroom to practice and extend their reading skills and hold students accountable for these activities. For example, they direct students to read independently, take pertinent notes, and locate unknown vocabulary words. Then, they check that the students have done this and can explain what they have done. Many teachers, though, do not use the reading block well. While they focus on instructing their small group, too many other students in the classroom color, work on dittos, or complete other busywork. In many cases, the teacher simply tells the other students in the classroom to read. But they rarely require students to use this reading in a meaningful way. Far too many teachers limit their expectations for students’ discussions of reading to answering basic comprehension questions and relaying story elements such as setting, plot, and characters. Too many teachers simply pass out assignments or tell students to read. Consequently, not all Sarah Dyer Barnes students comprehend, analyze, and interpret text well. *(following students, observing classes, meeting with the school improvement team, students, school administrators, and parents, talking with students, teachers, and school administrators, 2005 SALT Survey report, reviewing classroom assessments)*

In contrast to reading, almost every teacher at Sarah Dyer Barnes effectively teaches writing. They often model quality writing by creating stories with their students that demonstrate important aspects of quality writing. They display examples of quality writing within their classrooms, which students use to improve their work. The teachers point out the aspects of quality writing, such as style and sensory images, in the books they read with students. They expect students to write in all curricula areas, including Drug Awareness Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.), science, social studies, and math. Sarah Dyer Barnes teachers explain and use rubrics and criteria sheets well to help students understand their expectations for quality work. In many cases, they generate these in conjunction with their students. These teachers create print rich environments for students to reference and to improve their writing. These environments include word walls, “6 Trait” posters, synonym charts, and procedures for producing final, publishable pieces. Most important, the teachers empower students to see themselves as authors, and they use public celebrations such as Poetry Parties and book signings to showcase and share student work. While many teachers express concern that different teachers use different writing programs and they want common language across classrooms, all teachers emphasize the aspects of quality writing. Thus, Sarah Dyer Barnes students write well. *(following students, observing classes, discussing student work with teachers, observing the school outside of the classroom, meeting with the school improvement team, students, school administrators, and parents, talking with students, teachers, and school and district administrators, 2004 New Standards Reference Examination School Summaries, reviewing classroom assessments)*

Sarah Dyer Barnes teachers lack a common, school-wide understanding of problem solving. When SALT team members ask for examples of problem solving, too many teachers present worksheets with word problems requiring calculations. Rubrics for problem solving emphasize that the “correct strategy is used” and the “answer is correct.” Problem solving instruction here focuses on students arriving at the correct solution to a word problem. In fact, most students say the important part of problem solving is getting the right answer. Very few teachers ask students to solve multi-step tasks that can be solved in more than one way and that have more than one solution. Teachers report they realize this is a weak area, and they desperately want help and professional development to improve their instruction. *(following students, observing classes, observing the school outside of the classroom, meeting with the school improvement team and students, talking with students, teachers, and district administrators, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, discussing student work with teachers, reviewing classroom assessments, reviewing school improvement plan, reviewing classroom textbooks, 2004 New Standards Reference Examination School Summaries, reviewing district and school policies and practices, reviewing records of professional development activities, reviewing district strategic plan)*

Sarah Dyer Barnes teachers do work hard to help their students learn. They meet on their own time to work together and collaborate on lessons and rubrics. Their clear academic and behavioral expectations and established routines contribute to environments that are conducive to learning. Many spend significant amounts of their own money to buy the classroom supplies and library books they need. Teachers here care deeply about the well-being and education of their students. The vast majority of teachers say that many of the students here are “needy.” Some teachers, though, let the perceived “neediness” of their students become an excuse for these students to learn less. Additionally, too many teachers overly “teach to the middle.” That is, they too often ask all students in their classes to do the same thing at the same time, regardless of whether the task is too easy or too overwhelming for many of the students. *(following students, observing the school outside of the classroom, observing classes, meeting with the school improvement team, students, parents, and school and district administrators, talking with students, teachers, parents, and school administrators, 2005 SALT Survey report)*

Commendations for Sarah Dyer Barnes School

Hardworking, caring teachers

Effective writing instruction focused on the aspects of quality writing

Recommendations for Sarah Dyer Barnes School

Pursue and attend high quality, school-wide professional development on effective instruction in reading and problem solving.

Continue emphasizing the aspects of quality writing in writing instruction. Consider adopting consistent language from classroom to classroom.

Require students to use their reading for meaningful discussions and activities. Examine ways to maximize student learning in the available literacy time.

Provide students with additional multi-step complex problems that have multiple solutions.

Challenge all students to meet higher levels of learning.

Recommendations for Johnston School Department

Provide and require high quality, school-wide professional development on effective instruction in reading and problem solving.

Provide sufficient classroom materials and books to meet instructional needs for all students.

6. FINDINGS ON SCHOOL SUPPORT FOR LEARNING AND TEACHING

Conclusions

The SALT team has grave concerns about the special education practices at Sarah Dyer Barnes School. The school community says it follows an inclusion model for most of its special needs students. But it is unclear how this model functions, as it varies from classroom to classroom and grade to grade. In some classrooms, students with special needs are fully and successfully integrated into the class, to the benefit of all students. But some classrooms receive an abundance of support, including two full-time teachers, while other classrooms with greater need do not. Special education students move from classroom to classroom or grade level to grade level, losing valuable learning time. Numerous regular and special education teachers report that they cannot meet the requirements and provide the services as outlined in the students' Individualized Educational Plan, particularly the amount of time of direct services students are entitled to receive. The school also has a behavioral disordered self-contained classroom. Faculty report that this room is a dumping ground for the district, that the criteria for placing and exiting students from the class is ill-defined, and that students who are inappropriate for the classroom are placed there. Professional and clinical supports, such as psychologists and social workers, are insufficient to meet the needs of the very large (22%) special education population. As a whole, special education services at this school fail to optimize the learning of these students. *(following students, observing classes, meeting with school and district administrators and parents, talking with teachers, parents, and school administrators, reviewing district and school policies and practices)*

The principal is in her first year here, starting in late September after the school year began. Faculty and staff describe her as approachable, hardworking, and overwhelmed. Currently, most leadership efforts focus on preparing the school for the SALT visit. While this is important, too many teachers say that they need a stronger educational focus from the principal. Further, many faculty and staff report pervasive concerns about the school leadership at this time, including being abrupt, reprimanding faculty and staff to one another and/or in front of students, and insufficiently addressing disciplinary concerns. Although she has an open door policy and teachers do approach her with their concerns and questions, she spends insufficient time in classrooms to make well-informed decisions about the learning and teaching here. The principal has much immediate work to do to establish a common vision and a cohesive team with faculty and staff. *(observing classes, meeting with the school improvement team and school and district administrators, talking with teachers and school administrators)*

The climate of Sarah Dyer Barnes welcomes students and their families. Children say they feel safe and comfortable here, and they are eager to learn. Unfortunately, this atmosphere does not extend to all parts of the school community. Some parents report that the Parent Teacher Organization excludes them and ignores their suggestions. The faculty and staff remain divided over issues concerning the inequities in distribution of staff, materials, and supplies. In fact, they report that, "special education has divided this school in the past and continues to do so." Consequently, the Sarah Dyer Barnes community lacks the unity necessary for school-wide forward movement in student learning. *(following students, observing classes, observing the school outside of the classroom, meeting with the school improvement team, students, school administrators, and parents, talking with students and teachers, 2005 SALT Survey report)*

Professional development at Sarah Dyer Barnes insufficiently addresses the learning and teaching needs here. While all teachers take at least 15 hours of required district offerings, far too many communicate that they most often pick these classes according to convenience. The school lacks consistent, school-wide, school-based professional development focused specifically on its needs, resulting in inconsistent practices and teaching effectiveness. While the school improvement plan outlines common planning time and student work activities, neither of these is systematically in place yet. The principal does try to help teachers receive professional development by providing professional reading. Teachers, though, say they need to visit other classrooms and to collaborate with one another to implement this acquired knowledge effectively. *(following students, observing classes, meeting with the school improvement team and school and district administrators, talking with teachers and school and district administrators, reviewing records of professional development activities, reviewing school improvement plan, 2005-2006 Professional Development Institute Course Bulletin, reviewing district and school policies and practices)*

The current School Improvement Team well represents the school community. It comprises teachers from every grade level, the school administrator, a district representative, paraprofessionals, and parents. The plan is exceptionally well written, focused on student learning, and informed by multiple sources of data. Unfortunately, far too many teachers, including some on the team, are unfamiliar with the action steps in the plan. Other teachers report that the plan does not apply to them. Still others say simply that they do not like what is in the plan and therefore do not use it. Consequently, the plan is not effectively improving the school. *(following students, observing classes, meeting with the school improvement team and school and district administrators, reviewing school improvement plan)*

Commendations for Sarah Dyer Barnes School

Safe and welcoming school climate

Representative school improvement team

Well written school improvement plan focused on student learning

Recommendations for Sarah Dyer Barnes School

Review the effectiveness of the current special education program, and make immediate, needed changes to improve student learning.

Focus school leadership efforts on improving student learning and teaching for learning.

Continue to welcome students and families. Work to create a cohesive community, particularly among parents and staff.

Pursue and attend high quality, school-wide, school-based professional development focused on student learning needs, including special education.

Review the school improvement plan. Implement it within all classrooms.

Recommendations for Sarah Dyer Barnes School Parent Teacher Organization

Welcome, accept, and involve all interested Sarah Dyer Barnes parents.

Recommendations for Johnston School Department

Review the effectiveness of the current special education program, and make immediate, needed changes to improve student learning.

Provide and support high quality, school-wide, school-based professional development focused on Sarah Dyer Barnes School's learning and teaching needs.

Assist Sarah Dyer Barnes faculty and staff in reviewing and implementing the school improvement plan within all classrooms.

7. FINAL ADVICE TO SARAH DYER BARNES SCHOOL

The SALT team recognizes and acknowledges the hard work and dedication of the Sarah Dyer Barnes community. Your new leadership and your commitment to students can help you start the journey toward even higher levels of learning. Put aside your personal differences and work together for the best interests of your students. You possess the desire and ability to help your students achieve their full potential.

You should be proud of your accomplishments in writing; build on this strength to improve learning and instruction in reading and problem solving. Use your strengths to move forward as a collaborative team with the best interests of your students in mind.

Sarah Dyer Barnes teachers are knowledgeable about teaching and learning. Do not wait for district support; take initiative and collaborate to move your school forward. As you come together as a staff under new leadership, address the conclusions, commendations, and recommendations we have made in this report, formed to help you improve your school. We wish you well.

ENDORSEMENT OF SALT VISIT TEAM REPORT

Sarah Dyer Barnes School

January 27, 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.

DATE: February 13 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 Sarah Dyer Barnes 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 Sarah Dyer Barnes 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 Sarah Dyer Barnes 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

Teacher Newsletter Binder
Johnston Public Schools K-12 Curriculum Guide
Sarah Dyer Barnes Elementary School Class of 2005 Yearbook
Crisis Referral Binder
School Safety and Emergency Response Procedures Binder
Elementary ELA Data 2004-2005 Binder
Sarah Dyer Barnes Rubric Binder
Fall/Spring Writing Assessment Benchmarks Binder
Barnes 2004 Assessment Results Binder
Reading Assessments 2004-2005 Binder
Johnston Professional Development Institute Course Bulletins
Sarah Dyer Barnes School Home and School Communications

State Assessment Results for Sarah Dyer Barnes 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:

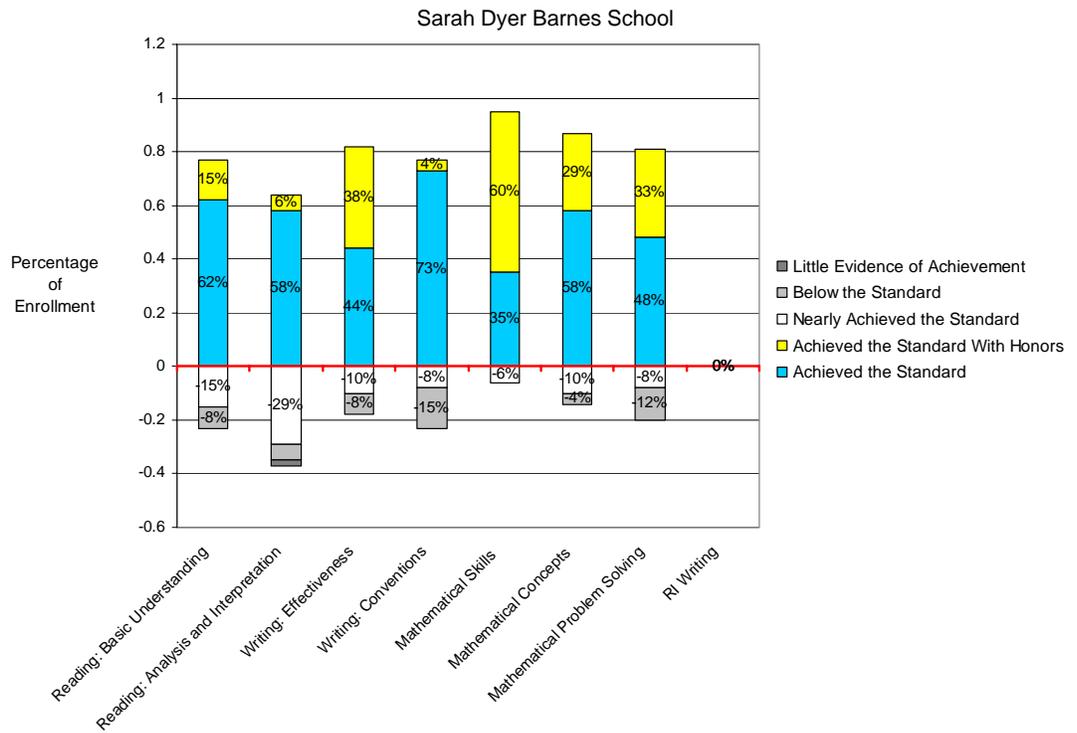
- ◆ *against performance standards,*
- ◆ *across student groups within the school, and*
- ◆ *over time.*

Information Works! data for Sarah Dyer Barnes 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. 2003-04 Student Results on Rhode Island State Assessment



REPORT CARD FOR SARAH DYER BARNES SCHOOL

In 2005, schools were classified by their attendance rate. Using this measure, Sarah Dyer Barnes School made adequate yearly progress.

The 2004 Report Card shows the performance of Sarah Dyer Barnes School compared to the school’s annual measurable objectives (AMO). This report card describes Sarah Dyer Barnes School as a High Performing and Improving 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 | s |
| All Students | 92.5 | YES | 88 | 86.1 | 92.1 | YES | 82.7 | |
| African Americans | * | YES | * | 77.8 | * | YES | * | |
| Asian | * | YES | * | 84.5 | * | YES | * | |
| Hispanic | * | YES | 81.7 | 75.8 | * | YES | 81.5 | |
| Native Americans | * | YES | * | 83.9 | * | YES | * | |
| White | 94.1 | YES | 84.1 | 88.5 | 93.4 | YES | 83.2 | |
| Students with Disabilities | * | YES | 71.8 | 69.5 | * | YES | 73.3 | |
| Students with Limited English Proficiency | * | YES | * | 68.9 | * | YES | * | |
| Students who are Economically Disadvantaged | * | YES | 81.3 | 77.8 | * | YES | 77 | |

| PERCENT of students tested, 2002-04 | Target: 95% | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|-----------|
| | this school | target met? | THIS DISTRICT | the state |
| English Language Arts | 99.2 | YES | 97.6 | 99.1 |
| Mathematics | 100 | YES | 99.8 | 99.4 |

| Attendance Rate | Target: 90% | | | |
|-----------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|-----------|
| | this school | target met? | THIS DISTRICT | the state |
| | 95.4 | YES | 95.7 | 94.8 |

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

this school is classified as:

High Performing and Improving

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

THE SARAH DYER BARNES SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT TEAM

Pam Alviti
Grade 1 Teacher

Nancy Brown
Johnston School Department
Professional Development Coordinator

Carolyn Carnevale
Grade 3 Teacher

Jody Graziano
Parent

Melissa Hafey
Parent

Monique Latessa
Principal

Kim Mattera
Parent

Jennifer Pavo
Grade 3 Inclusion Teacher

RoseMary Petrucci
Grade 4 Teacher

Rondelle Ruggiero
Literacy Coach

Roseann Rotondo
Teacher Assistant

Debbi Sgambato
Grade 5 Teacher, SIT Chair

MEMBERS OF THE SALT VISIT TEAM

Catherine E. C. Hutz
English Teacher
North Smithfield Junior-Senior High School
on leave to the
Office of Progressive Support and Intervention
Rhode Island Department of Education
Regents SALT Fellow
Team Chair

Donna M. Coderre
Grade 3 Inclusion Teacher
Social Street School
Woonsocket, Rhode Island

Sue DeAngelis
Special Education Resource Teacher
Primrose Hill Elementary School
Barrington, Rhode Island

Deborah Gendreau
Grade 2 Teacher
Fallon Elementary School
Pawtucket, Rhode Island

Margaret Rankin
Grade 4 Teacher
George J. Peters School
Cranston, Rhode Island

Maria Mare-Schulz
Principal
Sullivan Elementary School
Newport, Rhode Island

Lisa Vincent
Literacy Coach
Asa Messer Elementary School
Providence, Rhode Island

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR MEMBERS OF VISIT TEAM

INSERT HERE