



Burrillville Middle School

BURRILLVILLE

SALT VISIT TEAM REPORT

March 2, 2001



School Accountability for Learning and Teaching (SALT)

The accountability program of the Rhode Island Department of Education

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This report is available at www.ridoe.net/schoolimprove/salt

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1. THIS REPORT'S PURPOSE AND LIMITS

School Accountability for Learning and Teaching (SALT) is Rhode Island's comprehensive school accountability system. SALT is based on using information to improve learning and teaching so that the learning of all students in the state dramatically improves. The SALT visit and other major SALT components are designed to aid schools in their ongoing development and implementation of effective School Improvement Plans.

The purpose of the visit to Burrillville Middle School from February 27 to March 2, 2001, was to draw conclusions about the School in the three focus areas of SALT:

- ◆ Student Learning
- ◆ Teaching
- ◆ The School

The design of the SALT visit ensures that accountability supports improvement of schools by directly connecting judgments of quality and recommendations for improvement to the actual life and work of a school.

This report is built upon the observations and conclusions of the visit team. The visit team is composed of Rhode Island school practitioners and a parent. Their affiliations are included at the end of the report.

The School Improvement Plan for Burrillville Middle School was the touchstone document for the team. However informative written reports may be, there is simply no substitute for being at the school while it is in session - in the classroom, in the lunchroom, and in the hallways. The specific information generated by a team visit is about how the students, staff and administrators go about their day. Thus, this visit allowed professional colleagues and stakeholders to build informed judgments about the teaching and learning that actually takes place at Burrillville Middle School.

The visit team collected its evidence from the following:

- ◆ *a total of 98 full and partial classroom observations which totaled over 81 hours of time spent in direct classroom observation. Most classrooms were visited at least once. Most teachers were observed more than once.*
- ◆ *many observations of the school (outside of classroom)*
- ◆ *following 8 students for a full day*
- ◆ *observing the work of teachers, specialty teachers and staff for a full day*
- ◆ *scheduled meetings with the following groups:*
 - *SALT Self-Study Team*
 - *school and district administrators*
 - *students*
- ◆ *conversations and interviews with many students, teachers, staff, and school administrators*
- ◆ *examination of student work, including a selection of work collected by the school*
- ◆ *analysis of achievement and equity gaps based on Information Works! data*

- ◆ *review of district and school policies*
- ◆ *review of professional development activities*
- ◆ *review of classroom assessments.*
- ◆ *Burrillville School Department Professional Development Program 2000 – 2001 School Year*
- ◆ *observations of team meetings*
- ◆ *review of the following documents:*
 - *Burrillville Middle School Action Plan 2000-03*
 - *district strategic plan*
 - *1999-2000 SALT Survey report*
 - *classroom textbooks*
 - *1998 Information Works!*
 - *1999 Information Works!*

- 2000 Information Works!
- *1998, 1999, 2000 New Standards Reference Examination results*
- *1997, 1998, 1999, 2000 Rhode Island Writing Assessment results*
- *Burrillville School Department's "Essential Learnings" curriculum document*
- *School-Wide Enrichment Catalog of Activities; Fall, 2000*
- *Rhode Island Department of Education Office of Special Needs "School Support System Report and Support Plan for the Burrillville School System, October 18-25, 1999"*
- *Burrillville Middle School Office of the Principal Memo to members of the SALT Visitation Committee*
- *Article 31 Professional Development Investment Fund Plan documents*
- *Burrillville Middle School "Information for Parents and Students 2000-2001" handbook*
- *School-Wide Enrichment Catalog of Activities; Fall, 2000*

The full Team has built the conclusions, commendations and recommendations presented here through intense and thorough discussions. The visit team met for a total of 24 hours in six separate meetings spanning the four days of the visit. This time is exclusive of the time spent in classrooms, with teachers and in meetings with students, parents, and school and district administrators. The team sought to develop conclusions, commendations and recommendations in the three focus areas that, in its judgment, would be helpful to the school as it works to improve teaching and learning.

The team reached consensus agreement for each conclusion, each recommendation, and each commendation in this report.

It is important to note that the team overcame several important obstacles in collecting its evidence. The school did not complete several of the steps that schools are asked to complete before the team arrives including:

- Preparing requested documents for team review;
- Setting up most of the formal meetings that are part of the visit;
- Providing the visit team with an explanation for how student work was collected.

The other most important obstacles were:

- No parents showed up for parents meeting. The school provided neither warning nor plausible explanation.
- The unusually large number of strongly held misconceptions about the value and purpose of the visit that exist within the school.
- The apprehension of many teachers about conversations with team members. Some were afraid of retribution, if the principal learned they had shared information with a team member.
- The unusually frequent and large discrepancies between official explanations and descriptions about the school and the reality that was evident in the actual life of the school.

It is important to note that this report reflects a "moment" in the life of the school. The conclusions here are different from those that can be made from statewide assessment data or from information collected and analyzed by members of the school. This report is not intended to be prescriptive. Rather, it provides the school with a different lens for the school to help focus its consideration of important issues resulting in the development of strategies for overall improvement in the teaching and learning process.

The value of this report is not determined by the hard work of the team. The value will be determined by how Burrillville Middle School responds to the report. At first, Burrillville Middle School will have to overcome the strong and explicitly expressed position that "outsiders" cannot understand their school. Such an attitude could misdirect attention to discrediting the report, rather than promoting the school's thoughtful use of the report's conclusions, commendations and recommendations. The response of the faculty and staff will be most critical early on but later there is a shared responsibility to support the school in making progress. The Burrillville School District, the citizens of Burrillville, and the Rhode Island Department of Education will share that responsibility.

Following the school's review of this report, a properly constituted School Improvement team would consider what changes it needs to make in its school improvement plan. Once the team has revised its improvement plan, this revised plan will be the basis for negotiating a Compact for Learning with the Burrillville School District. The Compact's purpose is to ensure that Burrillville Middle School and Burrillville School District work out an agreement about the most important priorities for change at Burrillville Middle School and how the district can best target support to the school's efforts to implement its revised improvement plan. Burrillville Middle School's RIDE Field Service Team representative will offer some assistance in facilitating the preparation of the Compact.

It is important to read and consider this report as a whole. Recommendations and commendations should be considered in context with the conclusions. That is the way they were written.

2. PROFILE OF BURRILLVILLE MIDDLE SCHOOL

Burrillville Middle School serves students in the sixth through eighth grades. It is located in Burrillville, Rhode Island and is part of Burrillville's School System. Burrillville is a suburban community with a population of approximately 16,000 citizens. The Middle School first opened its doors to students in September 1989.

Most of the 686 students attending Burrillville Middle School are white; 2.1% of the student population is comprised of Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander and black students. A total of 156 students, or 23% of the population, are eligible to receive either free or reduced price lunch. 120 students, or 17% of the student population, receive special services.

The faculty consists of 59 full-time and 3 part-time teachers/specialists. Each member of the faculty belongs to both a team and a curriculum department. Students are organized for instruction by grade into academic teams. There are 6 academic teams of 5 teachers each, 2 per grade, supported by 8 exploratory teachers, 10 Special Education teachers, 2.5 counselors, and 3.6 fitness teachers. Students are placed heterogeneously by sex, ability, and social maturity in all classes but mathematics.

A management team of Discipline Assistants to the Principal has been implemented at the Middle School since the 1996-97 school year. Seven teachers volunteer to participate as members of a team working in collaboration with the principal to manage student behavior. One other teacher volunteers to supervise after-school detention.

Burrillville Middle School participates in the Working Wonders program and a School-Wide Enrichment program (SWE). An activity period offered each week allows students to select from a catalogue of activities. Two members of the Language Arts faculty have received national recognition for their *Working With A Writer's Notebook* program.

The school system is administered by a superintendent and a district staff of ten. It is governed by an elected school committee of 7 members. A town council with an appointed town manager governs the operations of the town.

On the 2000 New Standards Reference Examination in English Language Arts, the percentage of 8th grade students tested at Burrillville Middle School who achieved the standard or achieved the standard with honors was higher than the percentage of students statewide on all subtests. Conversely, on the Mathematics portion on the 2000 New Standards Reference Examination, the percentages of students tested who met or exceeded the standard were lower than the percentages statewide on all subtests.

The team used the test score information found in *Information Works!* and the 2000 New Standards Reference Exam School Summaries to determine the performance and equity gaps discussed in the student learning conclusions. 2000 New Standards Reference Examination results have been appended to this report. *Information Works!* data for Burrillville Middle School is available at www.ridoe.net.

3. PORTRAIT OF BURRILLVILLE MIDDLE SCHOOL AT THE TIME OF THE VISIT

Upon entering Burrillville Middle School visitors are impressed with its spacious and sprawling layout and the colorful murals that decorate its walls. It is apparent that teachers and staff work hard to create an atmosphere that is caring, nurturing, and child centered. Teachers are compassionate and conscientious, and dedicate themselves to teaching as a vocation, not just a job. The students take pride in their school and in their work.

The contrasts and contradictions in this building are many. For all of the positive attributes that are present in this school, there are some serious flaws. In spite of the dedication and commitment of this faculty, there is a serious lack of respect on the part of the school and district administrators for them as professionals. The opinion of some district administrators that teachers do nothing if they are not paid for it, is seriously flawed. Many examples exist where teachers have gone well beyond the contractual obligations to provide their students with enriching programs, activities, and in some cases, raising significant financial resources required to meet their basic needs. Teachers' professional judgment and integrity are often disregarded in instructional decision making. The unwillingness of the principal to allow all teachers to share in much of the decision making process hovers over this school like a dark cloud.

While the principal has the perception that members of this school community are generally well satisfied, happy, or content, this perception is not shared by many. The current school leadership is seriously eroding collegiality among the staff, and contributes to a sense of isolation and frustration that some teachers experience. Problems with disciplinary practices, student scheduling, curriculum, special education, professional development, and the teacher evaluation system, are just some of the issues that need to be addressed by all members of this school community.

4. FINDINGS ON STUDENT LEARNING

Sources of Evidence

- ◆ *1999 Information Works!*
- ◆ *1997, 1998, 1999, 2000 Rhode Island Writing Assessment results*
- ◆ *1998, 1999, 2000 New Standards Reference Examination results*
- ◆ *examination of student work*
- ◆ *Conversations and interviews with students and teachers*
- ◆ *scheduled meeting with students and the SALT Self-Study Team*
- ◆ *classroom observations*
- ◆ *following students*
- ◆ *observations made in the school*

Conclusions

Many students at Burrillville Middle School are proud of their work. They seek feedback and appreciate recognition for their accomplishments. Most students have responded well to the Schoolwide Enrichment Program and are highly motivated to participate in the activities offered. Many students have also responded well to the demands made for a minimum number of books to be read each quarter. However, the level of student attentiveness and responsiveness to instruction varies greatly. Some students are enthusiastic about their learning but others are disengaged. While some students are satisfied with the pace of instruction that they receive, others express frustration that the pace is too fast or too slow. As a result not all students feel that their academic needs are being met. (*Conversations and interviews with students, scheduled meeting with students, classroom observations, following students, examination of student work*)

While students are generally well behaved in most classrooms, some are disruptive, speak out inappropriately, and are disrespectful. This behavior takes valuable time away from instruction. The noise level and behavior in the locker areas, in the corridors between classes, and in the cafeteria is often excessively loud, unruly and sometimes unsafe. At times this contributes to a disorderly climate and discipline issues that carry over into classrooms. (*Observations made in the school, classroom observations, following students, conversations and interviews with students and teachers, scheduled meetings with the students and SALT Self-Study Team*)

Students at Burrillville Middle School read frequently during the school day. Students read different kinds of literature. Some students are reading books of substantial length and complexity and are able to analyze and interpret what they read. They read independently, and teachers also read to them. Students write book reports and use a variety of formats to report on the books they read. On the 2000 New Standards English Language Arts Reference Examination, 63% of 8th grade students tested at Burrillville Middle School met or exceeded the standard on the Reading, Basic Understanding Subtest, and 33% met or exceeded the standard on Reading, Analysis and Interpretation. *(1998, 1999, 2000 New Standards English Language Arts Reference Examination results, 1999 Information Works!, classroom observations, conversations and interviews with teachers and students, examination of student work, following students, scheduled meeting with students and the SALT Self-Study Team)*

Most students at Burrillville Middle School practice the art of writing each day. Some students write very well. Some students write across the disciplines. Most students write in a variety of formats including narratives, research reports, expository writing, poetry, and other genres. Some of the writing assignments require students to analyze and interpret information and ideas. Students also write about what they read. This finding is consistent with the fact that 52% of 7th grade students tested at Burrillville Middle School achieved the standard or achieved the standard with honors on the 2000 Rhode Island Writing Assessment as compared to only 31% of students statewide. *(Classroom observations, following students, conversations and interviews with teachers and students, scheduled meetings with students, examination of student work, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000 Rhode Island Writing Assessment results)*

A majority of students at Burrillville Middle School demonstrate competence in the use of mathematical skills. However, fewer students demonstrate an ability to use mathematical concepts to solve problems. Some students express frustration about their inability to master mathematical skills and concepts. This finding is supported by the results on the New Standards Mathematics Reference Examination where 61% of 8th grade students tested met or exceeded the standard in Mathematical Skills, while only 12% met or exceeded the standard in Mathematical Concepts, and only 23% met or exceeded the standard in Problem Solving. *(Conversations and interviews with students and teachers, scheduled meeting with students, following students, classroom observations, 1998, 1999, 2000 New Standards Mathematics Reference Examination Results)*

Commendations for Burrillville Middle School

Student involvement in the Schoolwide Enrichment Program

Recommendations for Burrillville Middle School

More closely monitor student behavior outside of the classroom.

Examine the “What students need” portion of the 2000 New Standards School Summary for Burrillville Middle School in English Language Arts and Mathematics Reference Examinations, and use these to guide and inform instruction.

5. FINDINGS ON TEACHING

Sources of Evidence

- ◆ *classroom observations*
- ◆ *observations of the school*
- ◆ *conversations and interviews with many students and teachers*
- ◆ *following students*
- ◆ *scheduled meetings with SALT Self-Study Team, school and district administrators, students*
- ◆ *1999 Information Works!*
- ◆ *Burrillville School Department Professional Development Program 2000 – 2001 School Year*
- ◆ *observations of team meetings*

Conclusions

Teachers at Burrillville Middle School are hard working, dedicated professionals, completely committed to the well being of their students and their families. Many teachers go well beyond their contractual obligations in committing their talents, energy, and efforts to projects and activities that enrich their students' learning. Teachers work to foster a sense of pride and community spirit by recognizing and addressing the financial, social, and emotional needs of all members of this school community. (*Observations in the school, classroom observations, following students, scheduled meeting with students, conversations and interviews with students and teachers, scheduled meeting with the SALT Self-Study Team.*)

While teachers seek meaningful opportunities to improve the quality of their instruction, these opportunities are limited, do not always address the needs of the staff and students, and do not necessarily result in the delivery of a better quality of instruction to all students. The current scheduled common planning time does not provide teachers adequate opportunity to share ideas, plan interdisciplinary units, or communicate with special education teachers. Additionally the current professional development program does not reflect the expressed needs of teachers, nor does it support what teachers are expected to know and be able to do. (*Burrillville School Department Professional Development Program 2000 – 2001 School Year, conversations and interviews with teachers, scheduled meeting with school and district administrators, and the SALT Self-Study Team, observations of team meetings*)

Many teachers have difficulty meeting the needs of all ability levels found in a heterogeneous classroom. The level of challenge for those students who are ready to move beyond skill levels often is not provided. At the same time those students who need more time to master basic skills are not fully accommodated. While teachers are expected to employ effective classroom practices such as grouping and regrouping, differentiation of instruction, or addressing multiple intelligences, the expectation of the district and school administrators that teachers are able to do this without benefit of appropriate professional development is troubling. (*Scheduled meetings with students and district and school administrators, conversations and interviews with teachers and students, classroom observations, following students*)

Some teachers at Burrillville Middle School successfully incorporate performance based assessments when evaluating students. Some use rubrics and have even included students in the development of rubrics. However, the use of performance based assessments and rubrics is very inconsistent, and sometimes misunderstood by both teachers and students. Additionally, teacher feedback on student work often lacks the diagnostic and prescriptive information that would enable students to improve their work. (*Following students, classroom observations, conversations and interviews with students and teachers, examination of student work*)

Commendations for Burrillville Middle School

The teachers' philanthropic work

The hard work, dedication and professionalism of the faculty

Recommendations for Burrillville Middle School

Increase common planning time and include special education teachers in all team planning times.

Provide professional development in the areas of curriculum development, standards based instruction, performance based assessment, the use and development of rubrics, classroom grouping practices, and differentiation of instruction.

Recommendations for the Burrillville School District

Provide the resources necessary for needed professional development and increased common planning time.

Recommendations for the Burrillville Teachers' Association

Proactively address the needs and concerns of the Burrillville Middle School teachers.

6. FINDINGS ON THE SCHOOL

Sources of Evidence

- ◆ *classroom observations*
- ◆ *observations of the school*
- ◆ *conversations and interviews with many students, teachers, and school administrator*
- ◆ *scheduled meetings with the SALT Self-Study Team, school and district administrators, students*
- ◆ *Following students*
- ◆ *review of the Burrillville School Department's "Essential Learnings" curriculum document*
- ◆ *review of School-Wide Enrichment Catalog of Activities; Fall, 2000*
- ◆ *Rhode Island Department of Education Office of Special Needs "School Support System Report and Support Plan for the Burrillville School System, October 18-25, 1999"*
- ◆ *Burrillville Middle School Office of the Principal Memo to members of the SALT Visitation Committee*
- ◆ *Article 31 Professional Development Investment Fund Plan documents*
- ◆ *Burrillville Middle School "Information for Parents and Students 2000-2001" handbook*
- ◆ *review of School-Wide Enrichment Catalog of Activities; Fall, 2000*

Conclusions

Educational and professional leadership at Burrillville Middle School is seriously flawed. The Superintendent of Schools has directed the development and implementation of the "Essential Learnings" curriculum without regard for the tools and supports teachers need to carry out these expectations. Some district administrators' perception that members of the professional staff are unwilling to give of their time and efforts without financial compensation, demonstrates a total lack of knowledge, respect and appreciation for their many efforts. The building principal also demonstrates a lack of respect and support for members of this faculty who do not share his personal and professional philosophies. His leadership style has resulted in a sense of frustration, isolation, and a general lack of honest communication in this school. All of these factors contribute to a school climate and atmosphere of distrust and uncertainty. *(Scheduled meetings with the district and school administrators, observations in the school, conversations and interviews with teachers students, and school administrator, review of the Burrillville School Department's "Essential Learnings" curriculum document)*

The "Essential Learnings" curriculum guide for Burrillville School Department will not provide for the high quality instruction teachers want to deliver. Most sections of this document do not reflect accepted and proven educational practices endorsed by professional educational organizations. For the most part it does not contain appropriate performance and content standards and is seriously lacking in quality. This curriculum guide is being implemented without regard for the ongoing professional development needs of teachers. It is doubtful that the implementation of this curriculum will result in improved student performance. Additionally, the district and school administration's desire to severely limit the use of textbooks for instructional purposes is being implemented without sufficient content materials, supports, or professional development. Furthermore, it restricts student opportunity to read in the content areas and develop a theoretical knowledge base. *(Scheduled meeting with the district administrator, conversations and interviews with teachers, review of the Burrillville School Department's "Essential Learnings" curriculum document)*

The current practice of using disciplinary assistants at Burrillville Middle School is problematic. While the principal, disciplinary assistants, and some staff are satisfied with the program, many lack confidence in this system's ability to provide for a safe, consistent environment conducive to learning. As a result, there is a division among the faculty and staff about the effectiveness of the program and the resulting school climate. *(Conversations and interviews with teachers and students, scheduled meeting with the school administrator, observations in the school)*

The current schedule at Burrillville Middle School is not serving the needs of all students. Serious problems with the random scheduling of "exploratories" and "mini exploratories" results in some students repeating the same courses even in the same day, and missing others altogether. This enrichment opportunity should be assured for all. Disproportionate class size also results, with some classes having fewer than five students, and others at or near capacity. *(Following students, classroom observations, conversations and interviews with teachers and students)*

The Schoolwide Enrichment Program at Burrillville Middle School provides exciting opportunities for students to explore areas of interest. Course offerings are extensive and demonstrate a desire to educate the whole child. However, not all students have the opportunity to participate in these special programs in every cycle. This results in some students'

placement in study halls during the Enrichment period. *(Conversations and interviews with students and teachers, observations in the school, following students, review of School-Wide Enrichment Catalog of Activities; Fall, 2000)*

While special educators at Burrillville Middle School work hard to provide for the needs of each and every student, their ability to deliver the appropriate special education services is often hampered. Individual Education Plan goals and objectives are sometimes based on service delivery options rather than evaluation results. The unwillingness and inflexibility of administrators with regard to scheduling, staffing, and the honoring of Individual Education Plans, calls into serious question the issue of compliance and the provision that each student's needs will be met. Also, the absence of a clearly delineated inclusion plan confuses the delivery of special education services. *(Scheduled meetings with district and school administrators, conversations and interviews with teachers, classroom observations, Rhode Island Department of Education Office of Special Needs "School Support System Report and Support Plan for the Burrillville School System, October 18-25, 1999)*

There is little evidence that a School Improvement Team that meets current legislative requirements exists for Burrillville Middle School. The principal has indicated that there are "two" school improvement teams, one which is designated as the SALT Self-Study Committee, and one which is made up of parents who have met twice in this school year. It is unclear which of these "School Improvement Teams" or appropriate subcommittees take responsibility for the fiscal decisions designated to them, or are charged with the actual improvement of Burrillville Middle School. As a result, issues of compliance with state mandates are questionable. *(Burrillville Middle School Office of the Principal Memo to members of the SALT Visitation Committee, scheduled meeting with the SALT Self-Study Team, conversations and interviews with teachers, Article 31 Professional Development Investment Fund Plan documents, Burrillville Middle School "Information for Parents and Students 2000-2001" handbook.)*

The Burrillville School Department is piloting a new teacher evaluation system. While the document states that the evaluation procedure is "based upon clearly established written criteria," each section lists examples of criteria that "might be considered." This leads to considerable apprehension and misunderstanding for some teachers. Some teachers also fear arbitrary and inequitable treatment in the evaluation process. *(Review of the Burrillville School Department Teacher Evaluation System document, December 18, 2000, scheduled meeting with the school administrator, conversations and interviews with teachers)*

Commendations for Burrillville Middle School

The Schoolwide Enrichment Program

Recommendations for Burrillville Middle School

Acknowledge the dedication and professionalism of your teachers.

Include teachers when making instructional decisions, planning professional development, scheduling, and developing curriculum.

Review the current disciplinary program and seek input from all members of the professional staff.

Revise the current master schedule with regard to the scheduling of exploratories and delivery of special education services.

Revise the delivery of special education services to reflect the specific needs of each and every child receiving those services, including the development of a clearly stated inclusion plan.

Create a School Improvement Team that meets legislative requirements.

Recommendations for the Burrillville School District

Acknowledge the dedication and professionalism of your teachers.

Review and revise the "Essential Learnings" curriculum guide to better reflect sound educational practices.

Reconsider your current plan to severely restrict and/or eliminate the purchase and replacement of textbooks.

Revise the current teacher evaluation document and include teacher input.

7. FINAL ADVICE TO THE SCHOOL

It is obvious that the dedication and professionalism of the Burrillville Middle School teachers enables student learning and teaching to thrive in the face of some significant challenges. We urge the members of this faculty to continue to set their sights on the lofty goals of meeting the social, emotional, and academic needs of each and every child.

This visit team has made many recommendations which we feel will improve the quality of instruction and student learning at Burrillville Middle School. However, the district and school administrators should acknowledge the strong emphasis we have placed on the need to include all members of this school community in the decision making process. This especially includes members of the faculty and parents. The failure of even one parent to attend the scheduled meeting with this SALT visit team is an indication that either communication or encouragement is lacking. An active and involved School Improvement Team must be formed to review and address the commendations and recommendations that they believe will have the greatest impact on teaching and learning at Burrillville Middle School.

This entire school community needs to improve the lines of communication and work to build a collegial and respectful school atmosphere. The Burrillville Teachers Association and district administration must actively support all members of this school community as they struggle with these issues. Diverse opinions, educational philosophies, and educational practices need to be acknowledged and respected. This can only enhance the learning experiences of each child and the professional experiences of all staff members.

BURRILLVILLE MIDDLE SCHOOL SALT SELF-STUDY TEAM

Kim Ayotte
Grade 8 Teacher

Louise Boucher
Special Education Teacher

Pamela Fracareta
Grade 8 Teacher

Andrea Gledhill
Grade 7 Teacher

Nancy Kyte
Music Teacher

Sally Marszalek
Grade 6 Teacher

Kathan Mospaw
Grade 8 Teacher

Pauline Mueller
Art Teacher

James Murphy
Grade 6 Teacher

Lisa Scotti-Johnson
Grade 7 Teacher

Kevin Stockwell
Technology Teacher

Ruth Sunn
Grade 7 Teacher

THE SALT VISIT TEAM

JoAnn LaBranche, Social Studies Teacher
Lincoln Senior High School, Lincoln, Rhode Island
(On leave to the Rhode Island Department of Education to serve as a SALT Fellow)
Chair

Caroline L. Aldrich, Parent
Woonsocket, Rhode Island

Paula F. Bailey, Assistant Principal
Samuel Gorton Junior High School, Warwick, Rhode Island

Roberta Harnois, Grade 6 Teacher
Cumberland Middle School, Cumberland, Rhode Island

Kathryn Kelley, School Library Media Specialist
Chariho Middle School, Wood River Junction, Rhode Island

David Raiche, Superintendent
West Warwick School Department, West Warwick, Rhode Island

Betty Ann Reynolds, Grade 7 Science Teacher
Lincoln Middle School, Lincoln, Rhode Island

Kim Savastano, Assistant Principal
Birchwood School, North Providence, Rhode Island

**NEW STANDARDS REFERENCE EXAMINATION AND RI WRITING
ASSESSMENT RESULTS (2000)**

ENDORSEMENT OF SALT VISIT TEAM REPORT

Burrillville Middle School

March 2, 2001

To complete the Catalpa Ltd. report endorsement, I observed seven hours of the visit on two different days, the Visit Chair apprised me of the progress of the visit each day of the visit, and I reviewed this report. Based on my knowledge derived from these sources of evidence, using the criteria specified in the *Endorsing SALT Visit team Reports by Catalpa Ltd.*, and using the methodology and procedures specified in the *Handbook for SALT Visit Chairs, 1st edition*), I conclude that:

1. This report was produced by a legitimate SALT Visit that was led by a trained SALT Visit Chair.
2. As the team noted in the *Purpose and Limits* section of this report, the team encountered several and unusual obstacles in collecting evidence. Many of these obstacles are contrary to the explicit protocols that a school is expected to follow in preparing to host a visit.
3. Because the team encountered these obstacles and because it constantly encountered inconsistencies in evidence, the team exercised unusual persistency in finding and checking evidence. The team weighed the veracity of evidence carefully as it formulated its conclusions. As a result of this hard work, the team gathered more than adequate evidence to form accurate conclusions.
4. The team's unanimous consensus about the wording of each conclusion was certain and strong throughout.
5. The conclusions and all other content of this report meet the criteria specified for a SALT Visit report.

Accordingly, Catalpa Ltd. endorses this report as a legitimate SALT Visit Report.



Thomas A. Wilson, EdD
Catalpa Ltd.
March 22, 2001