



Oak Haven School

Coventry

The SALT Visit Team Report

April 11, 2003



School Accountability for Learning and Teaching (SALT)

The accountability program of the Rhode Island Department of Education

The findings of this report are those of this SALT visit team. The names and affiliations of the members of the team are in the appendix. The team follows the school visit protocol in the *Handbook for Chairs of the SALT School Visit*. The team is required to focus on what it observes at the time of the visit and is restricted from comparing the school with any other. This school visit was supported by the Rhode Island Department of Education as one component of its accountability system, School Accountability for Learning and Teaching (SALT).

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1. THE PURPOSE AND LIMITS of this report

Overview

This is the report of the SALT team that visited Oak Haven School from April 7-11, 2003. The following features are at the heart of the report:

The team seeks to capture what makes this school work, or not work, as a public institution of learning. Each school presents a unique picture.

The team does not compare this school to any other school.

When writing the report, the team deliberately chooses the words that best convey its message to the school, based on careful consideration of what it has learned about the school dynamics.

The team makes its judgment explicit.

The major questions the team addresses are:

How well do the students learn at this school?

How well does this school teach its students?

How well does this school support learning and teaching?

The findings of the SALT report are presented in six report sections:

Profile describes some of the key features of the school and sums up the school's results on state tests.

The team writes *Portrait* as an overview of what it thinks are the most important themes in the conclusions that follow. While *Portrait* precedes the team's conclusions, it is written after they are complete.

The team's conclusions are about how well the team thinks the school is performing in each of the three SALT focus areas: Learning, Teaching and The School.

The team may award commendations in each focus area for aspects of the school that it considers unusual and commendable. The team must make several recommendations to the school for each focus area, drawing on the conclusions for that area. The team may make recommendations to other agencies, e.g. the district.

The team provides the school with some brief comments about how it thinks the school should proceed, in the *Final Advice* section.

The Catalpa Ltd. endorsement of the legitimacy of the report and its conclusions appears on the final page.

The SALT report creates accountability for improvement by connecting its judgments of quality and its recommendations for improvement directly to the actual work going on in this school at the time of the visit.

The team closely follows the visit protocol in the *Handbook for Chairs of the SALT School Visit*. The Catalpa endorsement certifies that this team followed the visit protocol and that this report meets all criteria required for a legitimate SALT visit 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.

Sources of Evidence for This Report

In order to write this report the team examines test scores, student work, and other documents related to this school. The school improvement plan for Oak Haven 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 builds its conclusions primarily from information about what the students, staff, and administrators think and do during their day. Thus, the visit allows the team to build informed judgments about the teaching, learning, and support that actually takes place at Oak Haven School.

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

- ◆ *The team spent a total of over 137.5 hours in direct classroom observation. Almost every classroom was visited at least once, and almost every teacher was observed more than once.*
- ◆ *observing the school outside of the classroom*
- ◆ *following 8 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*
- ◆ *discussing student work with teachers*
- ◆ *analyzing five years of 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 Oak Haven School*
 - district strategic plan*
 - 2002 SALT Survey report*
 - classroom textbooks*
 - 2002 Information Works!*
 - 2002 New Standards Reference Examination results*
 - 2002 Rhode Island Writing Assessment results*
 - 2002 New Standards English Language Arts Reference Examination School Summary*
 - 2002 New Standards Mathematics Reference Examination School Summary*
 - Agreement between the Coventry Teachers' Alliance School Related Personnel and the Coventry School Committee, September 2001-August, 2003.*
 - Agreement between the Coventry Teachers' Alliance Local 1075 American Federation of Teachers AFL/CIO and the Coventry School Committee, September, 2001-August, 2003*
 - Profiles for Technology Literate Students, Performance Indicators for PreK-2*
 - School Based Improvement Team minutes*

2002-2003 Budget folder

Teacher Evaluation folder

Coventry Mentoring Program

Coventry Public Schools Technology Plan

Health and Safety folder

Einstein Good Deeds folder

Report Card folder

Parent/Teacher Conference and Report forms

Copies of Principal's newsletters to parents

PTA Meeting minutes

Principal's Weekly Bulletins to teachers

Math Curriculum for Coventry Public Schools PreK-6

English/Language Arts Curriculum for Coventry Public Schools PreK-6

Elementary Science Curriculum draft

Math Standards in Kids Language

Oak Haven Scrapbook-evidence of humanitarian deeds and activities

Minutes from school-based action committees for health, math, school strategies, writing, reading, technology, and SALT committee

The full visit team built the conclusions, commendations, and recommendations presented here through intense and thorough discussion. The team met for a total of 35.5 hours in six separate meetings spanning the five days of the visit. This time is exclusive of the time the team spent in classrooms, with teachers, and in meetings with students, parents, and school and district administrators.

The team must agree that every conclusion in this report:

is important enough to include in the report.

is supported by the evidence the team has gathered during the visit.

is set in the present.

contains the judgment of the team.

Using the Report

The team deliberately chose the words, phrases, and sentences it used in its conclusions, as well as in the *Portrait and Final Advice*. Thus, this report is the team's best attempt to encourage and support the school's continued improvement in strengthening the learning of its students.

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

It is important to note that this report reflects only the week in the life of the school that was observed and considered by this team. The report does not cover what the school plans to do or what it has done in the past.

This report is not prescriptive. The value of this report will be determined by its effectiveness in improving teaching and learning. By considering how important it considers what the team has said and why, the school will take its first step in becoming accountable in a way that actually improves learning.

It is important to read this report and consider it as a whole. Recommendations and commendations should be considered in relation to the conclusions they follow.

After the school improvement team considers this report, it should make changes in the school improvement plan. The revised plan will form the basis for negotiating a Compact for Learning with the school district. The purpose of the Compact is to ensure that the school and its district work out an agreement about the best way to improve the school and the best way to target district support for the school. A RIDE Field Service Team representative will offer assistance in preparing the compact.

2. PROFILE OF Oak Haven School

Background

Oak Haven School, constructed in 1963, is a suburban neighborhood school located in Coventry, Rhode Island. An addition, built in August 1990, includes a gymnasium and two student lavatories.

Oak Haven School's professional staff consists of one school administrator, 15 classroom teachers, two resource teachers, one self-contained classroom teacher, two literacy teachers, one reading specialist, one full-time school nurse/teacher and one clerk. The paraprofessionals include 13 support and custodial staff, as well as six itinerant teachers. A part-time librarian also serves as a part-time Gates/Literacy/Technology coach. The reading specialist serves the Title 1 students and provides reading services to students in grades one and two.

Of the 340 students who attend Oak Haven School, 98% are white and 2% are black/Hispanic. Thirty percent of the students are eligible for free and reduced-price lunch. Sixteen percent of the students receive special education support services. A breakfast program is available to all students who attend Oak Haven School.

Oak Haven School provides a variety of programs and activities. These include an extended-day Kindergarten program, a writing and math after-school academy, a mentoring program for students, the Feinsein Good Deeds program, the Hunger Brigade, and several clubs including math, cooking, technology, yearbook, homework, chorus, keyboarding and safety patrol. Each of the six MCI classrooms is equipped with six computers, network printers, a scanner and a CD writer to integrate technology into the daily curriculum. Other classes have up to four computers, a printer, a CD writer and a scanner available for classroom use. Student teachers from Rhode Island College work in grades one and two in conjunction with teachers using the GEMS Kits. A monthly newsletter informs parents about upcoming events, as well as educational goals and activities in their children's classrooms. Although state funding for a Family Center, through the Children's Opportunity Zone, has been eliminated, the PTA provides funds to maintain this link between the school and the community.

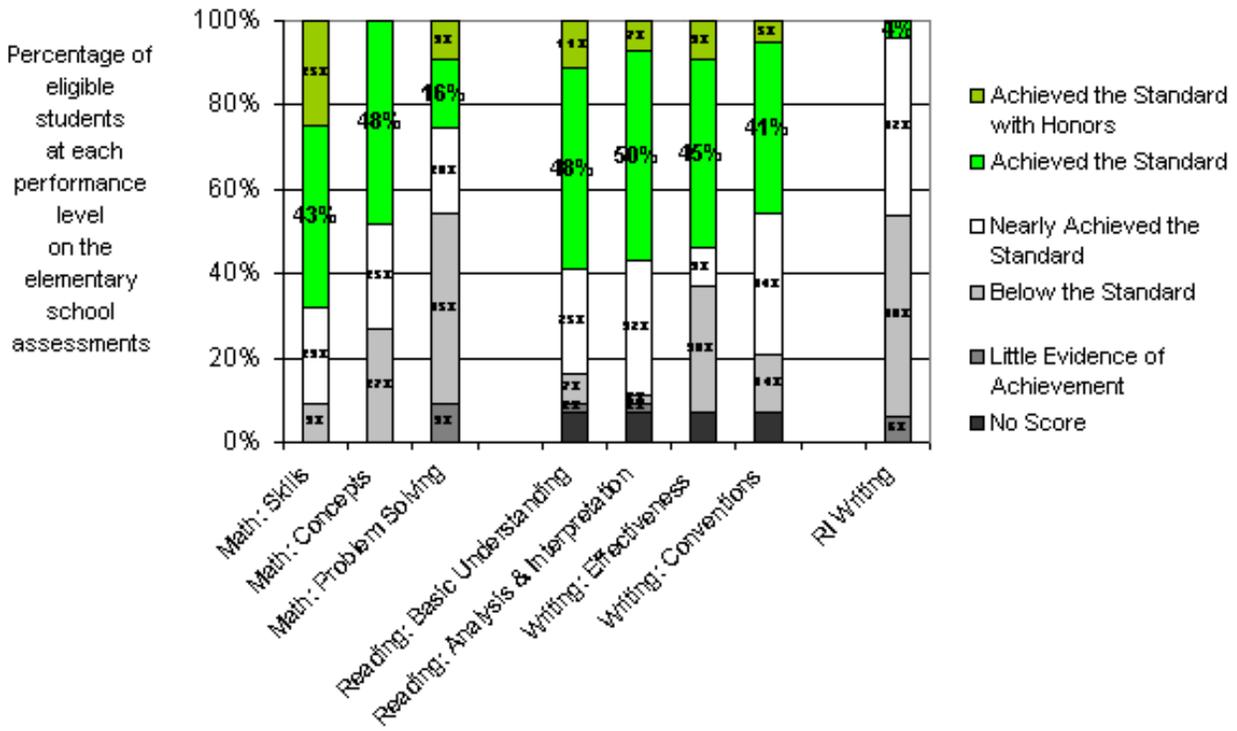
State Assessment Results for Oak Haven School

This section of the school profile shows results from the latest available state assessment program four different ways: against performance standards; compared to similar students in the state; across student groups within the school; and over time. Assessment results create pieces 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 for the school. It also uses this evidence, along with other evidence, to draw conclusions about those issues.

Results in relation to performance standards

The first display shows how well the students do in relation to standards in English/Language Arts and mathematics. Student results are shown as the percentage of students taking the test whose score places them in the various categories at, above, or below the performance standard. Endorsed by the Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education in 1998, the tested standards can be found in the publication *New Standards Performance Standards*.

Table1. 2001-02 Student Results on Rhode Island State Assessments

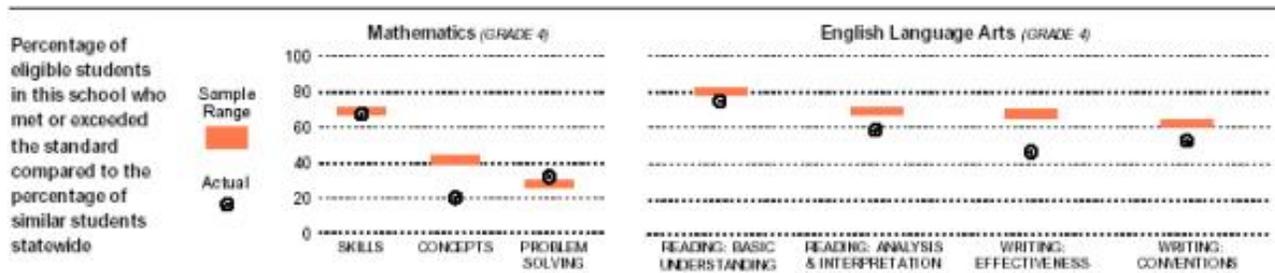


Students score well on reading, writing and math skills (46-68% achieve the standard). There is a dramatic drop in their performance on math problem solving to only 25% meeting the standard. The large numbers of students in the “nearly achieved the standard” level may bode well for improving levels of scores in the next round of testing.

Results compared to similar students in the state

This chart includes the performance levels of students with special education needs, students participating in ESL or bilingual programs, low socio-economic status (a composite of income level, racial background and parental education), as well as the performance of students with none of these characteristics. Taking all these characteristics into account, the graph displays the overall performance of students in this school compared to - a group of students from across the state whose characteristics match this school’s students.

Table 2. 2000-2001 Student Results in Comparison to Similar Students Statewide

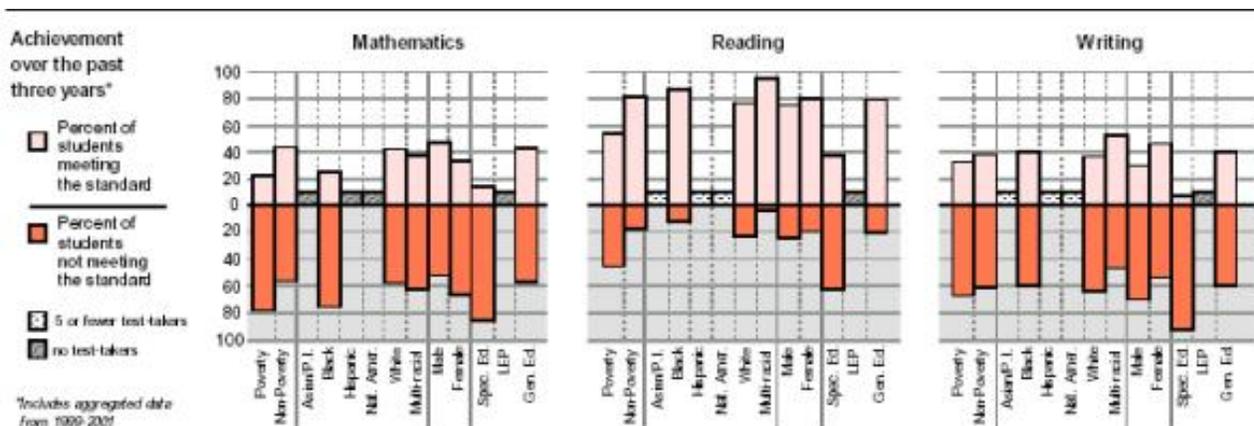


Students at Oak Haven School perform below similar students on all subtests of the 2001 New Standards Reference Examination except math skills and problem solving. This may be a puzzle that the school should study further, given the quite high level of performance overall.

Results across student groups within the school

An important way to display student results is across different groups of students with different characteristics who are in the school. This display creates information about how well the school meets the learning needs of its various students. Since breaking students into these smaller groups can result in groups becoming too small to show accurate results, this display shows the results based on three years of testing. The Department defines an important gap between different groups (an equity gap) to be a gap of 15% or more.

Table 3. . 2000-2001 Student Results across Subgroups



Equity gaps exist for special education students in reading, writing and math. Equity gaps also exist for poverty students in reading and math and for females in math as well as for males in writing.

Results over time

Now that the state assessment program has been functioning for five years, it is possible to show results over meaningful periods of time. This display shows changes in the percentage of students at or above standard and the percentage of students in the lowest performance categories. These displays correspond to the targets the Department of Education asked schools to set four years ago and are the basis for the department categorizing schools as improving or non-improving.

Table 4. 2002 Student Results Showing Change Over Time

The Oak Haven School has been categorized as a moderate performing school that is, improving in math on the basis of its assessment results from 1998 to 2002. The following tables show if the school improved or not in each area that defines improvement (*Yes* denotes improvement and *No* denotes no improvement.)

Mathematics: Skills		Mathematics: Concepts		Mathematics: Problem Solving	
<i>Increase in Percent Proficient</i>	<i>Decrease in Percent in Lowest Performance Levels</i>	<i>Increase in Percent Proficient</i>	<i>Decrease in Percent in Lowest Performance Levels</i>	<i>Increase in Percent Proficient</i>	<i>Decrease in Percent in Lowest Performance Levels</i>
No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes

Reading: Basic Understanding		Reading: Analysis and Interpretation	
<i>Increase in Percent Proficient</i>	<i>Decrease in Percent in Lowest Performance Levels</i>	<i>Increase in Percent Proficient</i>	<i>Decrease in Percent in Lowest Performance Levels</i>
No	No	No	No

Writing: Effectiveness	Writing: Conventions	Rhode Island Writing
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<i>Increase in Percent Proficient</i>	<i>Decrease in Percent in Lowest Performance Levels</i>	<i>Increase in Percent Proficient</i>	<i>Decrease in Percent in Lowest Performance Levels</i>	<i>Increase in Percent Proficient</i>	<i>Decrease in Percent in Lowest Performance Levels</i>
No	No	Yes	No	No	No

Oak Haven is categorized as a moderate performing school. Although scores improve in math, scores did not improve on any of the reading and writing indexes (with one exception).

Information Works! data for Oak Haven School is available at <http://www.rido.net>.

3. PORTRAIT OF Oak Haven School AT THE TIME OF THE VISIT

Tucked away at the end of a cul-de-sac, Oak Haven School is located in a small residential area of eastern Coventry, Rhode Island. The surrounding neighborhood is one of closely built ranch style homes. Many students walk to this neighborhood school. Their smiling faces are reflected in the murals of smiling children painted on the outside of the building.

When the children enter, they immediately see the school-wide theme of "Journey Across the United States" that permeates the school. Red, white and blue banners, stars and flags are everywhere. The corridors are lined with colorful murals of dinosaurs and the solar system, remnants of school themes from previous years. These unifying themes are the first visible sign of the unified, supportive, cooperative spirit that lies within the school. Banners stating school beliefs and student responsibilities hang prominently on every classroom wall. The transfer of these guiding beliefs into action is quickly evident when students and teachers begin their day.

This positive learning environment vividly reflects the passion and dedication of the principal, teachers and support staff. Working together, many have implemented new instructional practices from looping to guided reading. Creative scheduling for some teachers has created common planning time for them to share their ideas and coordinate their instruction. However, hampered by lack of adequate support staff, time to plan with colleagues and professional development; these new teaching practices are just beginning to spread throughout the school. Instruction groups are changing from homogeneous to heterogeneous. Special education teachers are struggling to implement a more inclusive instructional model. Despite these factors, teachers proudly boast about the success of their students and the willingness of the staff to try new approaches.

While the building is clean and neat, it needs repair. Buckets of water and stained ceiling tiles are evidence that the roof leaks. The heat fluctuates greatly. Computers often do not work. Classroom space is limited. However, none of these factors deter the teachers from providing a learning environment "where great minds can grow."

4. FINDINGS ON STUDENT LEARNING

Sources of Evidence

- ◆ *2002 Rhode Island Writing Assessment results*
- ◆ *observing classes*
- ◆ *observing the school outside of the classroom*
- ◆ *meeting with students*
- ◆ *2002 SALT Survey report*
- ◆ *reviewing classroom textbooks*
- ◆ *2002 New Standards English Language Arts Reference Examination School Summary*
- ◆ *2002 New Standards Mathematics Reference Examination School Summary*
- ◆ *talking with students, teachers*
- ◆ *reviewing completed and ongoing student work*
- ◆ *discussing student work with teachers*
- ◆ *reviewing classroom assessments*
- ◆ *reviewing attendance records*
- ◆ *following students*

Conclusions

All students at Oak Haven School write daily for a variety of purposes, which include report writing, narratives, procedural and persuasive pieces. In most classes students consistently and effectively brainstorm and utilize graphic organizers to organize their ideas and develop supporting details. They understand and regularly use grade-appropriate rubrics to guide their writing. While many students are developing the skills needed to be effective writers, others are not. Many students in some of the intermediate classes have a limited understanding of how to revise and edit their work in order to improve it. As a result, their writing often is not rich in language, and it lacks depth and voice, as well as the use of proper grammar and mechanics. (*observing classes, observing the school outside of the classroom, following students, talking with students, teachers, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, discussing student work with teachers, 2002 New Standards English Language Arts Reference Examination School Summary, 2002 RI Writing Assessment results*)

Students say and show they clearly understand the importance of reading to learn. They read for pleasure, to solve problems and to gain information, proudly tracking the number of books they read. In all grades, they listen attentively to read alouds, make predictions, and use reading as a tool to extend their knowledge. Many students correctly answer questions, both orally and in writing, proving that they undoubtedly understand what they have read. In all classrooms students work in pairs, in groups, and independently to complete reading activities. Those students working in mixed ability groups help each other to read aloud, to read fluently and to participate in challenging reading assignments. For some students grouped in similar ability groups, there are fewer positive role models to learn from and reading is less challenging for them. The opportunities for students to learn from their peers are limited. (*observing classes, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, following*

students, talking with students and teachers, 2002 New Standards English Language Arts Reference Examination School Summary, observing the school outside of the classroom, reviewing classroom assessments)

Students enjoy solving math problems in multiple ways. Working together in groups, they choose appropriate strategies and effectively use many math tools. Some students confidently use calculators, computers, overhead projectors, protractors, and other manipulatives to increase their understanding of math concepts. Many practice computation skills daily, and this helps them calculate accurate solutions to problems. While these practices occur regularly in most classrooms, students in mixed ability groups have more opportunities to learn from their peers than those who are not. Many students struggle to describe clearly how they have solved math problems. Student performance on the 2002 New Standards Mathematics Reference Examination reflects these findings. *(observing classes, following students, observing the school outside of the classroom, reviewing classroom textbooks, 2002 New Standards Mathematics Reference Examination School Summary, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, talking with students, teachers)*

Students at Oak Haven School cheerfully welcome everyone who visits their school. They say they like school and that a good education is important to them. They like challenging work. Their positive attitude toward learning allows them to take risks and set high goals. They are polite and respectful of adults and peers. Most students clearly understand what the school expects in terms of their academic achievement and behavior. A few do not, and their behavior interferes with the learning of others. *(observing classes, observing the school outside of the classroom, meeting with students, 2002 SALT Survey report, following students, talking with students, reviewing attendance records)*

Commendations for Oak Haven School

Enthusiastic, friendly learners, who take pride in their school

Recommendations for Oak Haven School

Continue and increase the use of the successful reading and mathematical practices established in your classrooms.

Continue to build on the foundation established for effective writing. Increase opportunities and model strategies for students to self-edit and revise their work.

Provide more opportunities for students to write across the content areas.

Increase opportunities for students to explain their mathematical reasoning, both orally and in writing.

Establish mixed ability groups for reading, writing and math.

5. FINDINGS ON TEACHING

Sources of Evidence

- ◆ *observing classes*
- ◆ *observing the school outside of the classroom*
- ◆ *meeting with the school improvement team, students, school and district administrators, parents*
- ◆ *reviewing school improvement plan*
- ◆ *reviewing district strategic plan*
- ◆ *2002 SALT Survey report*
- ◆ *reviewing classroom textbooks*
- ◆ *2002 New Standards English Language Arts Reference Examination School Summary*
- ◆ *2002 New Standards Mathematics Reference Examination School Summary*
- ◆ *talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrator*
- ◆ *reviewing completed and ongoing student work*
- ◆ *discussing student work with teachers*
- ◆ *reviewing records of professional development activities*
- ◆ *reviewing classroom assessments*
- ◆ *following students*

Conclusions

Writing instruction is not consistent across the grade levels. Teachers in the primary grades successfully teach all steps of the writing process. This good teaching guides their students to include descriptive words, supporting details and voice in their writing. Although teachers in the intermediate grades emphasize the prewriting steps of brainstorming and the use of graphic organizers, they do not emphasize revision and self-editing enough. As a result, students tend to produce simplistic writing. While the rubrics used by teachers are clear, consistent and developmentally appropriate, they lack some of the criteria necessary for quality writing, thus preventing students from developing the necessary skills for writing more in-depth pieces. (*observing classes, following students, reviewing classroom assessments, reviewing school improvement plan, discussing student work with teachers, talking with students and teachers*)

New approaches to reading instruction are helping students become more confident readers. Those teachers, who have received training in guided reading from the district, are effectively using leveled texts in flexible reading groups to meet students' instructional needs within their mixed-ability classes. Within these classrooms, literacy teachers work collaboratively to teach reading and writing. Looping teachers have the added advantage of working with their students for two years. Teachers boast about the success of these new practices, and children proudly show off their work. However, lack of materials, training and adequate support limits the spread of these practices throughout all grades. In some classes where homogeneous

instruction groups exist, there is not enough positive peer modeling of good reading practices. Resource teachers and a reading specialist struggle to provide additional reading support and instruction within their heavy caseloads. While many students have a solid foundation of basic reading skills, these constraints prevent them, especially those who have nearly met the standard on the 2002 New Standards English Language Arts Reference Examination, from becoming competent, confident readers. *(following students, observing classes, talking with students and teachers, reviewing classroom textbooks, reviewing school improvement plan, 2002 New Standards English Language Arts Reference Examination School Summary, observing the school outside of the classroom, meeting with the school improvement team school and district administrators, reviewing records of professional development activities)*

Math instruction is exciting at Oak Haven School! Many teachers creatively use real life experiences to make math come alive and to encourage students to use a variety of mathematical strategies to solve problems. Integration of technology, when it is working, allows students to display their data in spreadsheets and bar graphs. Students use manipulatives as tools to deepen their conceptual understanding of math. Regular practice of basic math facts helps students to compute accurately and feel more competent. However, these effective math practices are not consistently implemented on a school-wide basis. While a problem-solving rubric has been developed to assess student work, it does not set high enough expectations for mathematical communication and reasoning. Heterogeneous math groups are not consistent throughout the school, limiting opportunities for students to learn from each other. As a result, although students are becoming more confident about solving problems, they continue to struggle with justifying their solutions. This evidence correlates with student performance on the 2002 New Standards Mathematics Reference Examination. *(observing classes, reviewing school improvement plan, reviewing classroom textbooks, 2002 New Standards Mathematics Reference Examination School Summary, talking with students and teachers, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, discussing student work with teachers, reviewing classroom assessments, following students, reviewing district strategic plan)*

From novices to veterans, Oak Haven teachers are constantly trying new ways to help their students learn. They laugh together and support one another in their personal and professional endeavors. Teachers and staff trust one another enough to state that it is "OK to disagree." But, everyone does agree that the students come first. Students are proud to tell visitors that they love their teachers. Parents report that teachers challenge their children and keep them well informed of their children's progress. Teachers proudly describe their willing participation in professional development activities to broaden their skills and knowledge. They often share resources, ideas and teaching methods. Common planning time facilitates this process for some teachers, but not for all. Teachers' dedication and hard work is evident throughout the school. *(observing classes, meeting with the school improvement team, students, parents, 2002 SALT Survey report, talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrator, reviewing records of professional development activities, following students, reviewing district strategic plan)*

Commendations for Oak Haven School

Dedicated professionals who are receptive to change

Caring, supportive staff

Recommendations for Oak Haven School

Increase opportunities for students to problem solve. Revise rubrics on problem solving to elicit more in-depth explanations of mathematical reasoning from students.

Increase opportunities for students to write across the curriculum, especially in math.

Participate in professional development for writing and guided reading.

Revise the rubrics on writing to include all of the components of effective writing (i.e. Six Trait Writing).

Expand common planning time for all teachers.

Place students in mixed ability groups for all subjects.

Recommendations for Coventry School Department

Provide funding for professional development in guided reading, writing and math.

Provide funding for leveled reading texts and materials for the intermediate grades.

Support the school so it can provide weekly common planning time for all teachers, as stated in the District Strategic Plan.

6. FINDINGS ON THE SCHOOL

Sources of Evidence

- ◆ *observing classes*
- ◆ *observing the school outside of the classroom*
- ◆ *following students*
- ◆ *meeting with the school improvement team, students, school and district administrators, parents*
- ◆ *reviewing school improvement plan*
- ◆ *2002 SALT Survey report*
- ◆ *talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrator*
- ◆ *reviewing records of professional development activities*
- ◆ *reviewing district strategic plan*
- ◆ *reviewing Coventry Public Schools Technology Plan*
- ◆ *2002 Information Works!*

Conclusions

Support for special education is lacking. Teachers report that testing materials are outdated and do not reflect the expectations of today's classrooms. Special education teachers do not have common planning time with each other or with the regular education teachers. This limits their ability to coordinate and align their instruction with the regular education classrooms. Although they are using a guided reading approach, teachers report they lack the professional development training to use it well. Many students receive services in the resource room, thus separating them from their peers. When they return to their homerooms, some resume classroom work, while others complete alternate assignments provided by the resource teachers. These practices will not help to reduce the equity gaps in reading, writing and math. (*observing classes, talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrator, following students, 2002 Information Works!, meeting with the school improvement team, school administrator, reviewing records of professional development activities, reviewing district strategic plan*)

Although the building is clean and neat, it is not adequately maintained. The roof leaks. The wiring is inadequate for the electrical demands. The temperature fluctuates greatly throughout the building. There is not enough appropriate space for classrooms and storage. Music and some health classes meet in the cafeteria. Materials for Art instruction are carried around from classroom to classroom on a cart. The library media center is overcrowded. The library is not automated, and the collections need updating. Although there are many computers throughout the school, they often do not work. These conditions limit learning opportunities for all students. In addition, parents report that a lack of lighting in the parking lots during evening events is a safety issue. (*observing classes, following students, observing the school outside of the classroom, meeting with the school improvement team, school administrator and parents, reviewing Coventry Public Schools Technology Plan*)

The principal is a strong advocate for her faculty, students and the school. Her distributive leadership model involves teachers in school decision-making. Students say that she is nice, caring and respectful of others. District administrators and teachers report that she has exemplary management and organizational skills. The parents state that her extensive monthly newsletter keeps them informed about school events, as well as about the concepts being taught at each grade level. She makes herself readily available to parents, students and staff. Regular classroom visits enable her to know all her students by name. As an

instructional leader, she supports and encourages teachers to try new and innovative approaches in their classrooms. She sets high goals for herself, as well as for her staff and her students. (*observing the school outside of the classroom, meeting with the school improvement team, students, school and district administrators, parents, reviewing school improvement plan, 2002 SALT Survey report, talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrator*)

Commendations for Oak Haven School

Innovative, educational leader

Recommendations for Oak Haven School

Investigate and implement a more inclusive special education model. Provide adequate staffing and materials to achieve this goal.

Provide common planning time for all teachers.

Provide professional development in guided reading, writing and inclusionary practices for all teachers.

Investigate ways to gain more technological on site support.

Update library collections.

Recommendations for the Coventry School District

Allocate funding for adequate staff to implement a more inclusive special education model.

Provide updated testing and teaching materials, as well as professional development opportunities, for special education teachers.

Secure funding to automate the library.

Provide funding for needed repairs to the building, including updating the wiring, repairing the roof, installing lights in the parking lots and creating adequate space for art, music and health.

7. Final Advice to the School

The mighty oak growing in the front courtyard of your school signifies the strength of your Oak Haven family. It is rooted in the community with sound educational practices. The solid trunk represents the strong educational leadership that supports the teachers as they branch out and try innovative educational programs. Each branch nourishes the minds of individual students, who bud and blossom over the course of the school year as they become successful learners.

Continue to support one another and remain open to change. Don't lose your momentum and enthusiasm as educators. The changes you have made in your instructional practices are commendable. However, expand heterogeneous groups for all subjects to all grades. Explore different ways to instruct special education students within the regular education classrooms. Creatively find time for all grade level teachers to plan together, and be certain to include special education teachers in this common planning time. Share your knowledge so that it benefits all, from the lower branches of the primary grades to the upper branches of the intermediate grades. As you continue to challenge yourselves and your students, remember there are no limits for Oak Haven School "where great minds grow."

The Oak Haven School Improvement Team

Donna Raptakis
Principal

Maria Boulmetis
Grade 6 teacher

Paula Jacquard
Grade 5 teacher

Lisa Bouchard
Grade 5 teacher

Mary Kinney
Grade 4 teacher

Alan Rapoza
Grade 4 teacher

Beth Schart
Grade 3 teacher

Jessica Easton
Grade 1-2 looping teacher

Kim Lupino
Grade 1-2 looping teacher

Martha Gallagher
Grade 1-2 looping teacher

Shirley St. Amand
Grade 1-2 looping teacher

Gregory Tripp
Grade 1-2 looping teacher

Michelle Gallagher
Grade 1-2 looping teacher

Deb Tyree

Kindergarten teacher

Rita Anderson
School Library Media Specialist/Gates Coach

Denise Hennessy
School Nurse teacher

Anna Fitzgerald
Literacy teacher

Maureen Nadeau
Literacy teacher

Jason Parker
Resource teacher

Susan Smith
Special education teacher

Christine DeGraide
Parent

Kathleen McCoombs
Parent

Patricia Frigon
Classified Representative

The SALT Visit Team

Ruth S. Haynsworth
Grade 5 Teacher
Stony Lane Elementary School
North Kingstown, Rhode Island
On leave to the
Office of School Improvement and Accountability
Rhode Island Department of Education
As a SALT Fellow
SALT Visit Team Chair

Kathy Almanzor
Aspiring Principal
Jamestown School Melrose
Jamestown, Rhode Island

Kathy Catino
North Smithfield Elementary School
North Smithfield, Rhode Island

Monica Collins
JJM Cumberland Hill School
Cumberland, Rhode Island
Parent

Sue-Ann Kresinski
Grade 5 teacher
Metcalf School
Exeter/West Greenwich

Sandy Oliver
Grade 5 teacher
Quidnessett Elementary School
North Kingstown, Rhode Island

Susan Richardson
Grade 3 teacher
Curvin-McCabe Elementary School
Pawtucket, Rhode Island

Lynda Wilkie
Art teacher
Grades 1-6
Peace Dale School
South Kingstown Rhode Island

Endorsement of SALT Visit Team Report

Oak Haven School

April 11, 2003

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 two portions of the visit
- discussion with the principal regarding any concerns about the visit at the time of the visit
- thorough review of the report in both its pre-release and final version form

The findings from the review are:

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

3. The conclusions are legitimate SALT visit conclusions.
4. The report is a legitimate SALT visit report.

Accordingly, Catalpa Ltd. endorses this report.



Thomas A. Wilson, EdD
Catalpa Ltd.
DATE: May 7, 2003