Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
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Vincent J. Gallagher Middle School

SMITHFIELD

THE SALT VISIT TEAM REPORT

November 7, 2003

School Accountability for Learning and Teaching (SALT)

The school accountability program of the Rhode Island Department of Education

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Purpose and Limits of This Report

This is the report of the SALT team that visited Vincent J. Gallagher Middle School from November 3-7, 2003.

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 carefully designed to make it possible for visit team members to make careful judgments using accurate evidence. The careful 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 Vincent J. Gallagher Middle School?

How well does the teaching at Vincent J. Gallagher Middle School affect learning?

How well does Vincent J. Gallagher Middle School support learning and teaching?

The following features of this visit are at the heart of the report:

Members of the visit team are primarily teachers and administrators from Rhode Island public schools. The majority of team members are teachers. The names and affiliations of the team members are listed at the end of the report.

The team sought to capture what makes this school work, or not work, as a public institution of learning. Each school is unique and the team has tried to capture what makes Vincent J. Gallagher Middle School distinct.

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

When writing the report, the team deliberately chose words that it thought would best convey its message to the school, based on careful consideration of what it had learned about the school.

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

The team made its judgment explicit.

This report reflects only the week in the life of the school that was observed and considered by this team. The report is not based on what the school plans to do in the future or on what it has done in the past.

This school visit is supported by the Rhode Island Department of Education as a component of School Accountability for Learning and Teaching (SALT). To gain the full advantages of a peer visiting system, RIDE deliberately did not participate in the active editing of this SALT visit report. That was carried out by the team's Chair with the support of Catalpa. Ltd.

The team closely followed a rigorous protocol of inquiry that is rooted in Practice-based Inquiry™ (Catalpa Ltd). The detailed *Handbook for Chairs of the SALT School Visit* describes the theoretical constructs behind the SALT visit and stipulates the many details of the visit procedures. Contact Rick Richards at (401) 222-4600 x 2194 or ride0782@ride.ri.net for further information about the *Handbook* or other SALT protocols. The *Handbook* and other relevant documents are also available at www.Catalpa.org.

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 assures 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 139 hours in direct classroom observation. Most of this time was spent in observing complete lessons or classes. Almost every classroom was visited at least once, and almost every teacher was observed more than once.

The full visit team built the conclusions, commendations, and recommendations presented here through intense and thorough discussion. The team met for a total of 36 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 Vincent J. Gallagher Middle School can improve student learning. However, the most important audience is the school itself.

How your school improvement team reads and considers the report is the critical first step. RIDE will provide a SALT Fellow to lead a follow-up session with the school improvement team to help start the process. With support from the Smithfield 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 amend its School Improvement Plan to reflect these decisions.

The Smithfield School District, RIDE and the public should consider what the report says or implies about how they can best support Vincent J. Gallagher Middle School as it works to strengthen its performance.

Any reader of this report should consider the report as a whole. A reader who only looks at recommendations misses important information.

2. PROFILE OF VINCENT J. GALLAGHER MIDDLE SCHOOL

Vincent J. Gallagher Middle School, located in Smithfield, Rhode Island, serves students in sixth through eighth grade. The school opened in 1955 as a junior high in what is currently the Old County Road Elementary School. In 1976, a new school was built on a sixteen-acre parcel of land adjoining the grounds of the Anna McCabe Elementary School and the Smithfield High School. A new wing was added to the building in 1997. This included enlarging the gymnasium and library and the addition of eight new classrooms, two computer labs, another guidance office and a faculty room.

Gallagher Middle is organized around seven teaching teams. Most teams consist of five teachers—one teacher for each core subject—and a special educator. One split team that services both seventh and eighth graders consists of four core subject teachers. There is also an explorer team that includes the teachers in physical education/health, music, chorus, band, art, computer, family and consumer science, technology, library science, reading, French and Spanish. Each team is identified by color code and a mascot. Students travel among the core teachers for their subject content areas and, in some cases, for academic reinforcement. Students participate in a wide-range of competitive sports, as well as in community service organizations, a dance club, Yearbook Club, Students in Action and a robotics club.

A professional staff of two administrators and fifty-four teachers currently service Gallagher Middle School. Of the fifty-four teachers, six are special educators, 16 are explorer teachers and one is a school nurse. Three guidance counselors work with assigned students for three years. The school psychologist, the social worker, the occupational therapist and two speech therapists are shared with other schools in the district.

Of the 715 students in attendance, five are black, five are Asian/Pacific Islanders, and five are Hispanic. One hundred and one students receive special education, and 49students receive free or reduced price lunch.

A major emphasis on professional development exists throughout the district. The five focus areas are personalization, inclusion, literacy, assessment and technology. Many teachers use the knowledge from two recent programs, *Understanding by Design* and *Standards in Practice*, to improve their teaching. The weekly schedule includes daily common planning time for all core teachers and common planning time three times per week for explorer teachers. All teachers devote one planning session per week to literacy. The administrators lead text-based discussions with each team on a bi-weekly basis.

3. PORTRAIT OF VINCENT J. GALLAGHER MIDDLE SCHOOL AT THE TIME OF THE VISIT

Vincent J. Gallagher Middle School is an inviting, nurturing learning environment for young adolescents in sixth through eighth grade. The bright, clean, shiny halls are filled with displays of student work and over-crowded with friendly, polite students, passing from one class to the next. Students are motivated, organized and respectful.

At Gallagher Middle School students come first. The team approach provides students with smaller learning communities. Reciprocal respect and trust is evident. Teachers work collaboratively to meet the wide-ranging needs of their students. Literacy is the main focus of all instruction. Each autonomous team has the flexibility to decide what is best for its students. While common planning time provides daily opportunities for teams to discuss student progress and to coordinate their lessons, the lack of team leaders makes it difficult for teams to communicate with other grade levels and with other content area teachers. Many instructional practices are on the cutting edge, but these are not consistently implemented throughout the school.

The administrators have a definite grasp of the pulse of the school. They set high standards for themselves, as well as for the teachers and students. They lead by example.

The Gallagher Middle School faculty and staff are moving toward developing a sound learning community for middle school students. The challenges they face include: scheduling problems, space issues, the lack of enrichment programs, and the underutilization of the computer labs and the library.

In accordance with the No Child Left Behind legislation, Vincent J. Gallagher Middle School is a high performing and sustaining school.

4. FINDINGS ON STUDENT LEARNING

Conclusions

Almost half of the students at Gallagher Middle School are effective problem solvers. Forty-five percent of the students met or exceeded the standard on the 2003 New Standards Reference Examination. Working in cooperative groups, students make predictions, guess and check their answers, make organized lists and tables, look for patterns, and actively work with concrete objects to solve complex problems. Some students routinely use these strategies in all areas of the curriculum. When prompted, they use mathematical language effectively to explain different ways of solving problems. Many students often correct their own mistakes and are able to reflect on what they did wrong. Whether working independently, with partners or in groups, students readily ask questions to clarify their understanding. They use their strong computational skills to solve challenging problems that connect math to their other subject areas. More students need to further develop these skills in order to become effective problem solvers. Fifty-five percent did not meet the standard in problem solving on state tests in 2003. *(following students, observing classes, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, discussing student work with teachers, reviewing classroom assessments, reviewing classroom textbooks, 2003 New Standards Reference Examination School Summaries, student portfolios)*

Many students at Gallagher Middle School are confident readers and writers. They effectively read and write in all areas of the curriculum. These literacy tools help students extend their knowledge and explore new concepts. Many students effectively predict, use their prior knowledge, and identify basic story elements to understand both fiction and expository text. Students are learning the skills of analysis and interpretation. They defend their opinions with evidence and differentiate between necessary and extraneous information. Student writing shows the successful use of these skills. Their writing is organized, purposeful and detailed. Many write in journals. They write to answer questions, respond to literature, to describe and narrate, and to produce procedural pieces. Many students revise and edit their own work, both independently and with their peers. Students at Gallagher Middle School are developing the skills they need to become effective writers. However, some students do not have enough class time to fully develop their writing. As a result, their writing contains few supporting details and numerous errors in grammar and mechanics. *(following students, observing classes, meeting with students, school and district administrators, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, discussing student work with teachers, reviewing classroom assessments, talking with students, 2003 New Standards Reference Examination School Summaries)*

Students at Gallagher are organized and eager to learn. Their success as learners is built solidly upon their use of many learning tools. Most use binders, daily planners and rubrics to organize and guide their assignments. Most reflect frequently on their work, strive to improve it and take responsibility for making up missed tasks. They eagerly participate in projects and discussions and take leadership roles within their cooperative learning groups. Students at Gallagher Middle School are on their way to becoming independent learners. *(following students, observing classes, observing the school outside of the classroom, talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrators and school improvement team, discussing student work with teachers, reviewing completed and ongoing student work)*

Students are friendly, enthusiastic learners who enjoy school. They feel respected by their peers, teachers and administrators. If they have a problem, they are not hesitant to talk to their teachers or other adults in the school. They know where to go for help. While some students report that the amount of homework they are assigned is inconsistent and sometimes overwhelming, many want more challenging, meaningful assignments to do both within class and after school. The needs of individual students for support and challenge are met on a limited basis. *(following students, observing classes, observing the school outside of the classroom, meeting with students and parents, talking with students, faculty and staff)*

Important Thematic Findings in Student Learning

Students are motivated learners with strong organizational skills.

Students use evidence to build their conclusions.

Students build on their prior knowledge and use many strategies to make meaningful connections.

Some students require more class time than others to process information and complete their assignments successfully

5. FINDINGS ON TEACHING FOR LEARNING

Conclusions

Teachers at Gallagher Middle School are teaching their students to be effective problem solvers. They encourage and promote the use of mathematical skills in all content areas. They effectively group students and assign tasks that utilize the specific strengths of the learners. Teachers actively demonstrate how to gather evidence, compile data and analyze results. They provide real life problems to help students make meaningful connections. They ask open-ended questions to promote critical thinking and require students to explain their reasoning. However, these effective teaching practices are not evident in all classes. While most teachers utilize a hands-on approach to discovery, a few still rely on primarily teacher-directed lessons. Students in these classes are passive, rather than active, learners. *(following students, observing classes, meeting with students, talking with students and teachers, discussing student work with teachers, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, reviewing classroom textbooks, 2003 SALT Survey report)*

A substantial number of teachers routinely encourage students to move beyond their comfort zones to become more effective readers and writers. They demonstrate effective ways for students to express their views, form judgments, communicate their ideas and support their opinions. As a result, students emulate these practices in their reading, writing, speaking and listening. This is evident in the organized and purposeful student writing found throughout the school. However, these teaching practices are not consistently implemented in all classes. Consequently, not all students learn to use these valuable reading and writing tools in their daily lessons. *(following students, observing classes, talking with students, teachers, and district administrators, discussing student work with teachers, reviewing completed and ongoing student work)*

While some teachers effectively use portfolios to guide their instruction and to help students improve their work, many do not. Portfolio implementation and use vary from team to team and grade to grade. A number of teachers do not use portfolios at all. This inconsistent use diminishes the value of the portfolio as a learning tool and limits the number of students who can reflect consistently on their progress as learners. *(following students, observing classes, talking with students, teachers and school administrators, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, discussing student work with teachers, reviewing classroom assessments)*

Teachers at Gallagher Middle School are highly motivated professionals, who are constantly striving to improve their practice. Their classroom management and organizational skills are exemplary. In their classrooms they post their detailed daily plans, classroom routines and 30-day calendars, as well as folders containing work students may do for extra-credit, homework assignments, and make-up work. Most students have internalized these procedures and use them often. This school-wide organizational system sets clear expectations for students and parents, fosters student responsibility and independence, and supports all students. The faculty-wide commitment to this effort is commendable. *(following students, observing classes, observing the school outside of the classroom, 2003 SALT Survey report)*

Organized by teams, teachers successfully create small learning communities of students. While teaming promotes solid interdisciplinary connections, teams do not take full advantage of the flexibility provided by the "no bell" schedule. Teachers, for the most part, do not creatively use the most appropriate time frames to conduct class lessons that best match the learning outcomes expected. Because there are no department heads or team leaders for each team, the curriculum is not consistently implemented, and there are breakdowns in communication between and among teams. *(talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrators, observing classes, meeting with the school improvement team, students, school and district administrators, parents, 2003 SALT Survey report)*

Commendations for Vincent J. Gallagher Middle School

Highly motivated professionals with exemplary classroom management skills

Integration of reading and writing across the curriculum

School-wide organizational system

Recommendations for Vincent J. Gallagher Middle School

Increase the consistent use of hands-on activities and student-centered lessons that focus on critical thinking skills.

Provide professional development to coordinate and extend the use of student portfolios.

Continue to focus on literacy across the curriculum.

Create team leaders to promote consistency and communication among teams and content area teachers.

Extend class periods to support the needs of individual students.

Recommendations for Smithfield Public School District

Provide funding and support for the development of team leaders.

6. FINDINGS ON SCHOOL SUPPORT FOR LEARNING AND TEACHING

Conclusions

Strong, dedicated leadership is the backbone of Gallagher Middle School. The individual strengths of the two administrators work together to make a highly effective leadership team. Their obvious respect for one another sets the tone for the entire school. The principal and assistant principal are visible, proactive and easily accessible. They know their students by name, sit with them at lunch, and make daily visits to the classrooms. Their regular participation in text-based discussions with every team of teachers clearly communicates their commitment to literacy. They take risks and make hard decisions in the best interests of their students. While some teachers feel their voices are not heard, all teachers, students, parents, staff, and the district administrators have a high regard for the school's leadership. *(meeting with the school improvement team, students, school and district administrators, parents, observing the school outside of the classroom, observing classes, talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrators, following students)*

While the building is clean and inviting, several factors negatively affect student learning. Space is lacking for the increasing number of students, and the space that is available is not always used for its intended purpose. Because the explorer teachers (French, Spanish and health) and reading teachers move from room to room, they lose valuable instruction time. Science labs are used as non-science classrooms. Study halls and meetings in the library limit student access. Misuse of space, the lack of high-interest fiction and an uninviting atmosphere discourage students from using the library. Computer access time is also inefficiently used. Computers and software need updating. Technology equipment in the classroom is limited, a concern sited in the school improvement plan. All of these inadequacies limit the effective use of these important learning spaces and tools. *(observing classes, talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrators, observing the school outside of the classroom, following students, reviewing school improvement plan, 2003 SALT Survey report)*

It is remarkable that all core teachers have a daily common time, as well as a daily preparation time, to plan and coordinate their lessons. However, their rigid adherence to the seven period day often interrupts student learning and effective teaching. While teachers have the flexibility to extend their class periods, most do not. These short time periods limit in-depth study and negatively affect the learning of students, who require more time to understand new material. Too few teams use the Connection time to its fullest advantage. *(following students, observing classes, meeting with the students and parents, talking with students, teachers and school administrators)*

The entire Gallagher learning community does an outstanding job of integrating special needs students into school activities. They are included in all aspects of school life from sports to academics. Other students see resource teachers as an extension of the team. This collaborative teaching model benefits everyone and reflects the district philosophy that all students are "general education students, but some are entitled to specialized services." (*following students, observing classes, observing the school outside of the classroom, meeting with district administrators, talking with teachers and staff)*

Gallagher Middle School is committed to, and places a major emphasis on, professional development. The school uses innovative, job-embedded professional development to make literacy an important focus of the school. Text–based discussions about literacy occur on a weekly basis during the teachers' common planning time. These discussions are springboards for improving classroom instruction. Through collaboration with Rhode Island College and Providence College, teachers can take graduate courses in literacy that are subsidized by the district. Although teachers attend other valuable workshops, they do not regularly share their newly learned information with the entire staff. As a result, not all students benefit from these professional growth activities. *(reviewing records of professional development activities, reviewing Gallagher Middle School self-study, meeting with the school improvement team, school and district administrators, talking with teachers, and school administrators, 2003 SALT Survey report)*

Few opportunities exist for students to participate in after-school programs. Parents, students, teachers and school administrators state a need for additional tutoring, enrichment activities, and programs in the arts for some students. However, only a limited number of these activities exist because of the lack of transportation and funding. While sports, robotics, yearbook and dance classes are excellent after school programs, they do not address the interests and needs of all students. Team sponsored programs such as ECHO (Extended Classroom Help Opportunities) and EGGS (Eighth Graders at Gallagher School in Action) target students on specific teams, but more inclusive programs are needed to address the needs of at-risk students, to explore the varied interests of all students, and to foster school spirit. *(meeting with the school improvement team, students, school and district administrators, parents, talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrators, observing classes, reviewing school improvement plan*)

Commendations for Vincent J. Gallagher Middle School

Strong, cohesive, unified administrators

Daily common planning time

Commitment to literacy

Integration of special needs students into the learning community

Recommendations for Vincent J. Gallagher Middle School

Provide extra curricular activities for all students, and explore alternative funding.

Provide after school transportation.

Expand the library collection with the addition of high interest literature for young adults.

Utilize the flexibility in scheduling to increase class time and to make better use of the library media center and the computer labs.

Increase school-wide opportunities for teachers to share their professional development experiences.

Update, repair, and increase the technology available at the school.

Provide professional development in the implementation and use of student portfolios.

Recommendations for Smithfield Public School District

Explore alternative funding for after school programs.

Provide funding for after school transportation.

Continue to support the school's literacy initiatives.

7. FINAL ADVICE TO VINCENT J. GALLAGHER MIDDLE SCHOOL

Gallagher Middle School provides its students with many tools for life-long independent growth. Organization is one of your greatest assets. Continue to strengthen it. Your emphasis on literacy, critical thinking and sound learning and teaching strategies makes Gallagher a positive educational force in the community of Smithfield. What is best for students is the underlying philosophy for all that happens here.

Your path to success has many steps. The administration, faculty and staff have what it takes to keep Gallagher on this successful path. The education programs offered at Gallagher indicate you are on a course that will improve student learning. You owe this accomplishment to your dedicated faculty, strong leadership, responsive students, and supportive parents.

Continue to build on your successes. Use your self-study and this report to look introspectively and honestly to assess what you can do better. These recommendations can only make your solid foundation stronger. Good luck to the Gallagher Middle School learning community as you continue to grow.

ENDORSEMENT OF SALT VISIT TEAM REPORT

Vincent J. Gallagher Middle School

November 7, 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 www.Catalpa.org). 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 Ltd. 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 be 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* (available at www.Catalpa.org).

Since unexpected circumstances might result in either the team or the school straying too far from the protocol for a visit, Catalpa Ltd. 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 Ltd.'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 routine steps that Catalpa Ltd. completed for this review were:

1. discussion with the chair about any issues related to the visit before it began
2. daily discussion of any issues with the visit chair during the visit
3. observation of two portions of the visit
4. discussion with the principal at the end of the visit week regarding any concerns about the visit at the time of the visit
5. thorough review of the report in both its pre-release and final version form

The findings from the review are:

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

Accordingly, Catalpa Ltd. endorses this report.

Thomas A. Wilson, Ed.D.
Catalpa Ltd.
DATE: November 24, 2003

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 Vincent J. Gallagher Middle School was the touchstone document for the team. No matter how informative documents may be, however, there is no substitute for being at the school while it is in session—in the classrooms, in the lunchroom, and in the hallways. The team built its conclusions primarily from information about what the students, staff, and administrators think and do during their day. Thus, this visit allowed the team to build informed judgments about the teaching, learning, and support that actually takes place at Vincent J. Gallagher Middle School.

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

- *direct classroom observation*
- *observing the school outside of the classroom*
- *following 10 students for a full day*
- *observing the work of teachers and staff for a full day*
- *meeting at scheduled times with the following groups:*
  - *teachers*
  - *school improvement team*
  - *school and district administrators*
  - *students*
  - *parents*
- *talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrators*
- *reviewing completed and ongoing student work*
- *discussing student work with teachers*
- *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 Vincent J. Gallagher Middle School*
  - *district strategic plan*
  - *2003 SALT Survey report*
  - *classroom textbooks*
  - *2003 Information Works!*
  - *2003 New Standards Reference Examination School Summaries*
  - *2003 Rhode Island Writing Assessment results*
  - *Middle School World Languages Curriculum*
  - *K-12 Library Media Program Curriculum*
  - *Middle School Language Arts Curriculum*

Performance Assessments in Language Arts

Middle School Math Curriculum

Middle School Visual Arts Curriculum

Middle School Science Curriculum

Middle School Social Studies Curriculum

Vincent J. Gallagher SALT Initiative 1997/98,99/00,01/02,02/03 Academic Years

Agreement between the NEA Smithfield and the Smithfield School Committee (Sept. 1, 2001-August 31, 2003)

Special Education Procedures Manual

Smithfield Public School District Professional Development 2002

Smithfield Public School Education Program Budget 2003/04

Consolidated Resource Program Budget

Vincent J. Gallagher Student Handbook 2003/04

School Report Night 01/02, 02/03

Smithfield Public Schools Strategic Plan 2003-2008

State Assessment Results for Vincent J. Gallagher Middle School

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.

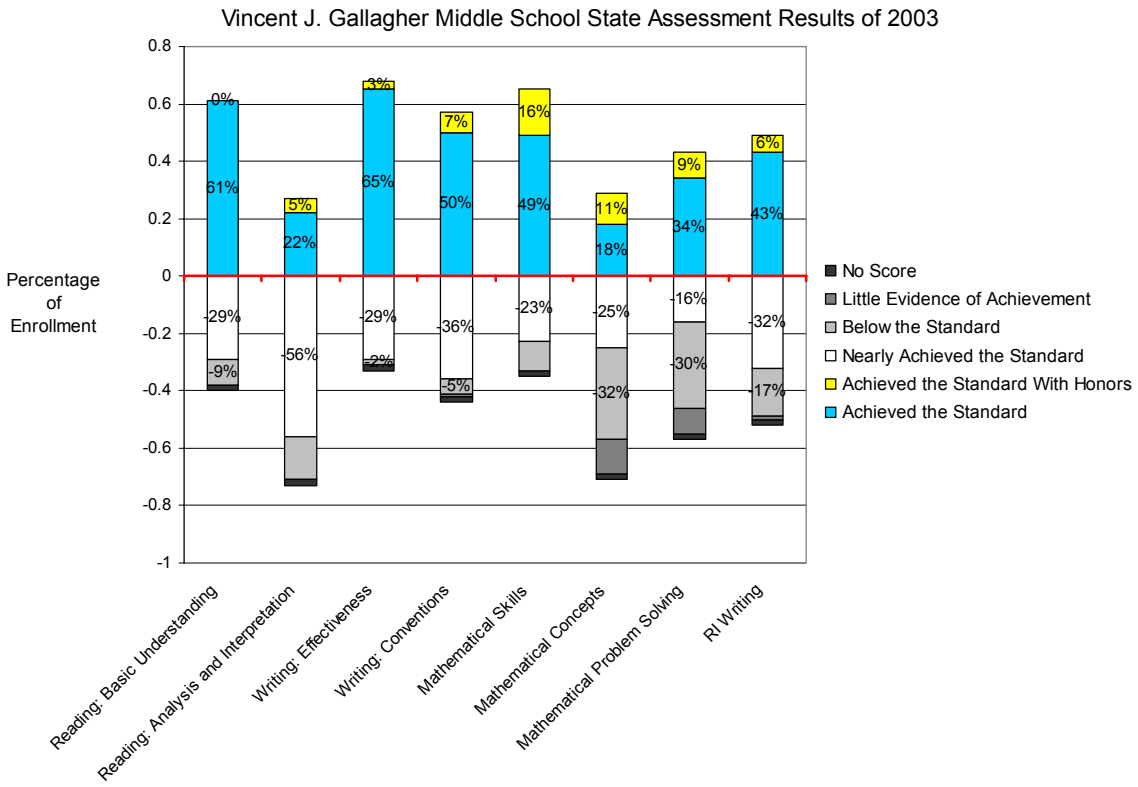
This school's results are from the latest available state assessment information. It is presented here in four different ways:

- *against performance standards;*
- *compared to similar students in the state;*
- *across student groups within the school;*
- *and over time.*

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*.

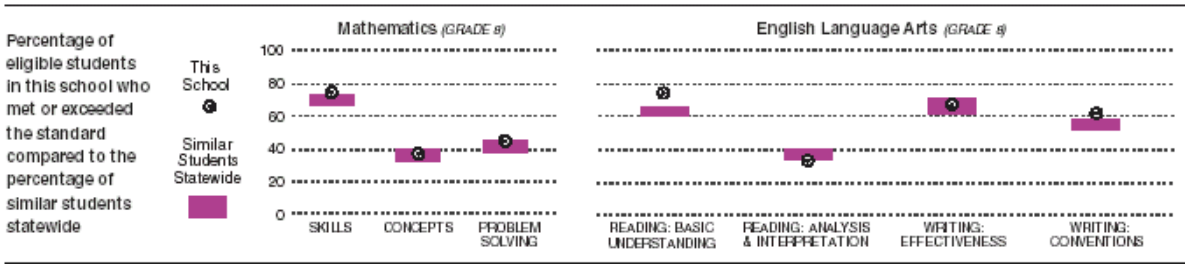
Table1. 2002-03 Student Results on Rhode Island State Assessments



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.

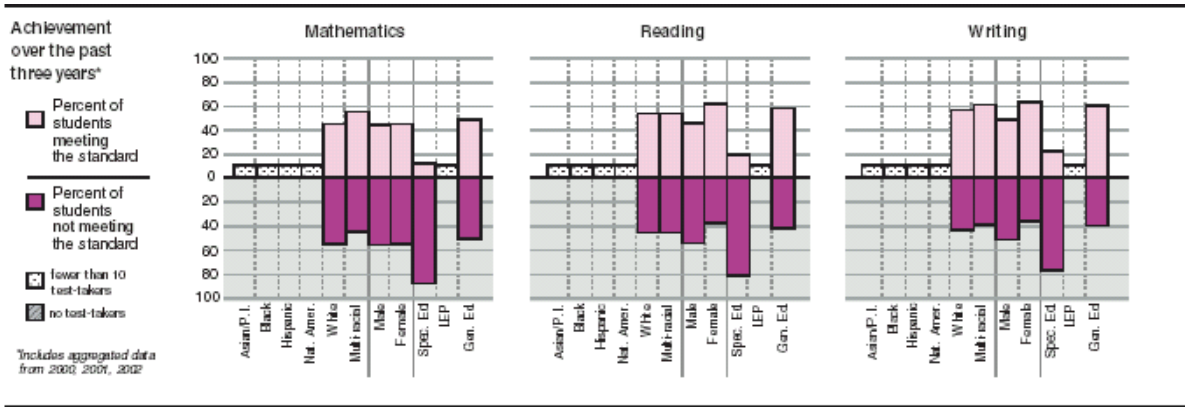
Table 2. 2001-2002 Student Results in Comparison to Similar Students Statewide



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. 2001-2002 Student Results across Subgroups



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. The Vincent J. Gallagher Middle School has been categorized as a high performing, improving in math on the basis of its assessment results from 1998 to 2002.

Information Works! data for Vincent J. Gallagher Middle School is available at http://www.ridoe.net.

THE VINCENT J. GALLAGHER MIDDLE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT TEAM

Eileen Adler
Parent

Patricia Ayotte
Language Arts Teacher

Laurie Beauvais
Assistant Principal

Deborah Buffi
Parent/Co-Chair

Deborah Cardin
Special Education Teacher

Kathleen Connell
Health/Physical Education

Keith Daniels
Computer Science/Technology

Bruce Ewart
American History Teacher
Athletic Director

Jeanne Fogarty
Social Studies Teacher

Ann Giorgio
Special Education Teacher

Carol Gonsalves
Parent

Donna Gray
Special Education Teacher

Mary Grundy
American History/Social Studies Teacher

Nancy Kozatek
Parent

Michael Neubauer
Computer Science/Co-Chair

Catherine Pleau
Social Studies Teacher

Dr. Karl Smith
Principal

MEMBERS OF THE SALT VISIT TEAM

Ruth S. Haynsworth
Grade 5 Teacher
Stony Lane Elementary School
North Kingstown, Rhode Island
On leave to the Rhode Island Department of Education
To serve as SALT Fellow
Team Chair

Subhash Chander
Assistant Principal
Deering Middle School
West Warwick, Rhode Island

Donna Chelf
Grade 7 Teacher
Gaudet Middle School
Middletown, Rhode Island

Dorothy Cummings
Grade 5 Teacher
Chariho Middle School
Chariho, Rhode Island

Scott Leonard
Grade6-8 Health Teacher
Ferri Middle School
Johnston, Rhode Island

Gary Martinelli
Resource Teacher for Grades 9-12
Ponaganset High School
Foster/Glocester, Rhode Island

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7th grade Math Teacher
Slater Junior High
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Gilbert Stuart Middle School
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