



Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
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North Smithfield Elementary School

NORTH SMITHFIELD

THE SALT VISIT TEAM REPORT

February 4, 2005



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 North Smithfield Elementary School from January 31-February 4, 2005.

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 North Smithfield Elementary School?*
- ◆ *How well does the teaching at North Smithfield Elementary School affect learning?*
- ◆ *How well does North Smithfield Elementary 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 North Smithfield Elementary School distinct.

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

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

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

The team made its judgment explicit.

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

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

The team closely followed a rigorous protocol of inquiry that is rooted in Practice-based Inquiry™ (Catalpa Ltd). The detailed *Handbook for Chairs of the SALT School Visit, 2nd Edition* describes the theoretical constructs behind the SALT visit and stipulates the many details of the visit procedures. The *Handbook* and other relevant documents are available at www.Catalpa.org. Contact Rick Richards at (401) 222-4600 x 2194 or ride0782@ride.ri.net for further information about the SALT visit protocol.

SALT visits undergo rigorous quality control. Catalpa Ltd. monitors each visit and determines whether the report can be endorsed. Endorsement assures the reader that the team and the school followed the visit protocol. It also 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 133 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. Team members had conversations with various faculty and staff members for over 38 hours.

The full visit team built the conclusions, commendations, and recommendations presented here through intense and thorough discussion. The team met for a total of 33 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 North Smithfield Elementary 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 North 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 North Smithfield School Department, RIDE and the public should consider what the report says or implies about how they can best support North Smithfield Elementary 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 NORTH SMITHFIELD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

North Smithfield Elementary School, built in 1989, is located in the rural, southern end of North Smithfield, Rhode Island. In January 2002 a new wing was added to the building. Throughout the years, North Smithfield has restructured grade levels many times. The school currently houses students from preschool through grade three, but it periodically has housed students in the fourth, fifth and sixth grades, when space was limited at the other elementary schools in the district.

Presently there are 29 classrooms with one inclusion classroom at every grade level. There are two inclusion preschool classrooms, each having two-and-a-half hour morning and afternoon sessions. Currently, the school rents one of its classrooms to the Northern Rhode Island Collaborative to house approximately five students, who are taught and supervised by Northern Rhode Island Collaborative personnel.

Of the 578 students, 98% are white, one percent is Asian and one percent is black. Forty-nine students receive free or reduced-priced lunch, 68 students receive special education services, 10 students have Section 504 plans and two students receive ESL services.

The faculty and staff of North Smithfield Elementary consists of one principal, one assistant principal and 33 classroom teachers, including six special education teachers, three resource teachers, nine full-time or part-time itinerant teachers and five reading specialists. One nurse/teacher, one social worker, three full-time or part-time speech language pathologists, 18 full-time or part-time teaching assistants, one school secretary, one clerk/typist and four custodians complete the staff. Each inclusion classroom has one regular education teacher and one special education teacher. Each resource teacher provides services to approximately five to ten students.

North Smithfield Elementary School's mission is, "To educate students in a safe and developmentally appropriate learning environment, so that every child is challenged to their fullest potential and prepared for continued growth and learning through a quality curriculum." Numerous programs are available to students, parents and teachers to help the school achieve this goal. These include a Before School Reading Program for below standard level readers; a literacy Series for teachers and support staff to discuss literacy-related topics (1-1/2 hours per month); the NSES Community of Writers, held before school to foster appreciation of writing; and the NSES Teacher Book Club, held after school where teachers read and discuss curriculum related books, as well as fiction selections. Many other programs also support and celebrate learning, including the Integrated Arts Program, coordinated and facilitated by the NSES itinerant teachers; a Math Night, sponsored by the NSES School Improvement Team math subcommittee; and Writers' Notebook Night, as well as Lunch with the Principals, Young Authors Teas, and the Dr. Seuss' Birthday Pajama Party Night for students and parents. The North Smithfield Parent Teacher Organization also provides a variety of cultural arts programs, field trips, guest speakers and workshops for parents. Additionally, the school works closely with the town police and the fire departments to coordinate the school safety programs.

3. PORTRAIT OF NORTH SMITHFIELD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL AT THE TIME OF THE VISIT

North Smithfield Elementary School is a bright, cheery facility that houses students from preschool through grade three. The building is immaculately clean, with sparkling halls and inviting classrooms. Smiles are abundant, and an excitement for learning permeates the school. The teachers, students, administrators, support staff and parents exemplify a learning community where learners try new ideas and work together to support one another.

The administrators set the tone for this cooperative learning environment. The strong leadership team constantly seeks ways to improve, always asking, “How can we do it better?” They strive to balance professional freedom with research-based instruction. Their creative scheduling provides time for teachers to plan, learn and reflect on their teaching practices. They recognize the importance of on-going professional development and provide time and resources to improve the quality of instruction. The school runs like a well-oiled machine.

North Smithfield Elementary has many assets. The faculty cares greatly about their students. Teachers work hard to create routines and procedures that support and guide their students’ learning. They also try new ideas and work together to develop and improve their instruction. A strong integrated arts program helps students connect learning across curricula areas. The inclusion classrooms address the needs of all students in the least restrictive environment. Strong parent involvement, both at home and at school, provides added support for students. Unfortunately, the absence of district-wide curricula leaves teachers without guidelines and creates inconsistent expectations throughout the grades.

While this learning community is working hard to improve student learning, challenges exist. There are pockets of discontent within the faculty. Few teachers feel involved in the decision-making process. A strong emphasis has been placed on literacy and less on problem solving. Teachers require more support and professional development in mathematics instruction and the use of technology. Changing district leadership has stalled work on developing district curricula, a new teacher evaluation tool and a new report card. All of these factors inhibit the forward momentum of the school.

4. FINDINGS ON STUDENT LEARNING

Conclusions

Students at NSES overwhelmingly concur that reading allows them to use their imaginations! They say they learn new things and like to “get lost in their reading.” Most students read exceedingly well. Their enthusiasm, confidence and active thinking about reading is clearly evident. They even understand why reading is important. They read all the time and know how to choose books from a variety of genres that are appropriate for their reading levels. Students at every grade level know how to use their critical thinking skills to predict, infer and connect what they read to their lives and to other books they have read. Students understand what they read by using appropriate strategies. They competently and effectively use think marks, sticky notes and “turn and talk” to identify the important parts of a story. They ask good questions about what they have read. Their writing further enhances their understanding of text. Students publish their own books, are proud of their work and eagerly share it with anyone who is willing to listen. As a result, students are successful readers. It is not surprising that eighty-eight percent of the students achieved or exceeded the standard in basic reading understanding and that seventy-four percent achieved or exceeded the standard in analysis and interpretation on the 2004 New Standards Reference Examination. *(following students, observing classes, talking with students and teachers, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, discussing student work with teachers, 2004 New Standards Reference Examination School Summaries, meeting with the school improvement team)*

In contrast, many students are not confident, competent problem solvers. While students have a proficient knowledge of basic computational skills, they are not proficient in applying these skills to actual problem solving situations. In many classes they do not spend enough time exploring different ways to solve actual problems. Not enough students fully understand the underlying math concepts of the math games they play. Students know how to use a number of problem solving tools including number lines, hundreds charts, base ten blocks, calculators and unifix cubes. While students enjoy working with these tools, they rely too much on teacher direction in deciding which one to use to solve specific problems. Furthermore, students who do understand the math lessons often are not challenged to extend their knowledge. These students finish tasks quickly, then sit and wait or read a book while the others finish. They say math is too easy and that they are bored. The SALT team concurs. The low number of students achieving or exceeding the standard in math concepts and problem solving on the 2004 New Standards Reference Examination supports these findings. *(following students, observing classes, talking with students and teachers, meeting with students and parents, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, discussing student work with teachers, reviewing classroom assessments, 2004 New Standards Reference Examination School Summaries)*

Students are solid writers who have a strong foundation in basic writing skills. Both the literacy coaches and the teachers say that students are comfortable writing and think of themselves as authors. Across all grade levels, they are developing the practices that lead to quality writing. They know how to organize their ideas without guidance. Some make webs, others draw pictures, and others use prompts to begin their writing. Students know how to use word walls and “sizzle words” to help them when they become stuck. More importantly, students understand the importance of improving their work. However, too much of their writing often follows a prescriptive pattern. While journal writing is often creative and original, students do not consistently carry these traits over to the assignments they complete during the Writer’s Workshop. They rarely extend their writing beyond the lessons that are modeled. While eighty-six percent of the students met or exceeded the standard in writing effectiveness on the 2004 New Standards Reference Examination, only twenty-four percent did so on the 2004 Rhode Island Writing Assessment. *(following students, observing classes, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, discussing student work with teachers, talking with students and teachers, meeting with students, 2004 New Standards Reference Examination School Summaries, 2004 Rhode Island Writing Assessment results)*

Students at North Smithfield Elementary School are motivated learners who listen to one another and to their teachers. Their positive attitudes and behaviors lead to a productive learning environment. While they effectively communicate their thinking when they share their reading and writing with others, they do not transfer this skill to math. Students report they like learning new things. They are not afraid to ask for help. However, many are satisfied merely to meet the expectations of their teachers and rarely push themselves or strive to go beyond “secure.” Not enough students understand how they learn best. *(following students, observing classes, meeting with students, talking with students, teachers, and parents, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, discussing student work with teachers)*

Important Thematic Findings in Student Learning

Students:

- ◆ *Are enthusiastic, confident learners*
- ◆ *Are proud of their work and eager to share it*
- ◆ *Are excellent readers and competent writers*
- ◆ *Strive to meet teacher expectations*

5. FINDINGS ON TEACHING FOR LEARNING

Conclusions

Teachers at NSES teach reading exceedingly well. They lead by example. They transfer their love of reading to their students through their enthusiastic and competent instruction. They value independent reading, giving students daily opportunities to read for extended periods of time. Teachers use frequent assessments to guide and tailor their instruction for individual students, thus appropriately challenging every child. Despite the lack of a district curriculum, teachers utilize a variety of consistent, structured balanced methods to teach phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension skills. To extend the joy of reading beyond the classroom, they send home bags filled with books appropriate for students' reading levels and related activities for parents to do with their children. They devote extensive time and effort to address the needs of at-risk students, through such programs as Lindamood Phoneme Sequencing (LiPS™) and Reading Recovery. Teachers and the SALT team overwhelmingly agree that the full-day kindergarten allows students to get a "jump start" on their reading by learning the readiness skills and strategies needed for a solid reading foundation. Capable, knowledgeable literacy coaches collaborate, model and co-teach reading lessons, as well as lead book discussions that expand and provide a common knowledge base to improve instruction. As a result, NSES students are competent, confident readers who love to read. *(following students, observing classes, meeting with the school improvement team, students, parents, school and district administrators, talking with students, teachers, school administrators, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, reviewing classroom assessments, discussing student work with teachers)*

Teachers are proficient writing instructors. Their mini-lessons and conferences emphasize writing conventions and the specific components of writing genres. While this practice supports students in learning the fundamentals of effective writing, it also limits their creativity and originality. Too few teachers push students to add original ideas and details. Teachers require students to write daily, providing ample time, support and direction for them to write well. Some teachers write simultaneously with their students, sharing their love of writing and building a learning community. The enthusiasm for writing begins in the full-day kindergarten and continues to grow through the primary grades, increasing student confidence and competence. *(following students, observing classes, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, talking with students, teachers, discussing student work with teachers, 2004 New Standards Reference Examination School Summaries, 2004 Rhode Island Writing Assessment results, meeting with the students and parents)*

Not all teachers teach math well. They acknowledge they need more professional development, guidance and support. Teachers feel rushed and must adhere to a strict schedule to finish the book. They do not prioritize what needs to be taught. They lack a curriculum to provide continuity and consistency across the grades. During math lessons, teachers use manipulatives to demonstrate math concepts, to increase student understanding and to differentiate instruction. Unfortunately, they allow limited time for students to explore and apply what they learn. Many teachers are not confident of their ability to teach math effectively. Far too many teach directly from the *Everyday Math* teacher's manual and neglect the necessary additional instruction of the underlying mathematical concepts. Most teachers do not ask questions that require students to extend their knowledge. As a result, students are not achieving their full potential in mathematics, particularly in the areas of problem solving and mathematical concepts. *(following students, observing classes, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, talking with teachers, meeting with the school improvement team, students, parents, school and district administrators, discussing student work with teachers, 2004 New Standards Reference Examination School Summaries, reviewing school improvement plan)*

Cooperative spirit and teacher support flourishes at NSES. Strong grade level bonds exist. Teachers rely on and encourage one another to increase the effectiveness of their instructional practices. They view themselves as learners and strive to improve. Because both teachers and administrators value continuous professional development, teachers meet regularly to discuss and analyze student work, to develop their personal writing skills and to discuss professional and current literature. Teachers co-teach, co-plan and effectively use a variety of instructional methods to address the needs of their students. A strong integrated arts team develops and implements thematic units related to the classroom curricula. These units integrate the arts with reading, writing and problem solving and help students connect what they are learning in the classroom to the real world. All of these practices promote strong bonds among faculty members and enhance the learning community. It is surprising that many teachers report that they do not feel part of the decision-making process. They feel their concerns are not always addressed by either the school or district administrators. *(following students, talking with teachers, parents, school and district administrators, meeting with the school improvement team, students, parents, school and district administrators, observing classes, observing the school outside the classroom, 2004 SALT Survey report)*

Commendations for North Smithfield Elementary School

Dedicated professionals who continuously strive to improve

Cooperative, supportive spirit

Excellent reading instruction

Competent literacy coaches

Recommendations for North Smithfield Elementary School

Provide additional professional development for effective math instruction. Utilize math expertise of colleagues to develop teacher competency and confidence in mathematics instruction.

Deliberately and explicitly teach problem solving strategies, and connect these strategies throughout all subject areas. Expand questions to encourage student understanding and discovery of math concepts.

Spend more time instructing mathematics. Increase time for exploration and application of math concepts, as well as for problem solving.

Continue to promote strong literacy practices. Push students to extend their own writing beyond the teacher models provided.

Continue to collaborate and work effectively together. Consider meeting across grade levels to build a continuum of learning.

Continue to share your love of learning with your students.

Take the initiative and become more involved in the decision making process.

Recommendations for North Smithfield School District

Provide ongoing, extensive professional development in the area of mathematics.

Capitalize upon the district work that has already been done to further develop district-wide curricula in the areas of reading, writing, math, science and social studies.

Continue to support early intervention programs in literacy.

6. FINDINGS ON SCHOOL SUPPORT FOR LEARNING AND TEACHING

Conclusions

A strong leadership team consisting of two administrators, literacy coaches and the school improvement team guides NSES. The complementary leadership style of the two principals facilitates the daily running of the school. Additionally, both are actively involved in district-wide initiatives and act as leaders within the district. They recognize the importance of ongoing professional development and support that by providing schedules that allow for teacher collaboration, self-reflection and professional growth. Competent literacy coaches support the teachers in their teaching and learning. The school improvement team reviews goals and examines data to make instructional decisions. All of these leaders work together to develop and support a strong learning community. However, the lack of district leadership forces the school to put many district initiatives on hold, including curricula, a new report card and a new teacher evaluation tool. Too many district level responsibilities fall on the shoulders of school leaders. *(following students, observing classes, observing the school outside the classroom, meeting with the school improvement team, parents, school and district administrators, talking with teachers and school administrators, reviewing school improvement plan, North Smithfield Teacher Growth, Supervision and Evaluation Policy)*

The lengthy and cumbersome school improvement plan, as mandated by the district, is not user-friendly. Additionally, teachers do not have the most prescriptive part of the plan. While the school improvement team examines data and reviews findings from student work, it does not adjust the action steps to meet student needs better. As written, the school improvement plan is not an effective tool for improving student learning. *(following students, talking with teachers, meeting with the school improvement team, school and district administrators, observing classes, reviewing school improvement plan, 2004 New Standards Reference Examination School Summaries, 2004 Rhode Island Writing Assessment results, reviewing completed and ongoing student work)*

North Smithfield Elementary School accepts and appreciates students of all learning styles. A seamless implementation of the inclusion model provides all children with meaningful learning opportunities. Teachers work collaboratively and share their expertise to provide a stimulating learning environment using a multi-sensory approach. Flexible grouping, differentiated instruction and peer modeling are found throughout the school. Consequently, students blend together to create a unified learning community. Parents and teachers report that students cannot identify which students are in special education and which students are not. Students work together, help one another and demonstrate mutual respect. As a result, all students have equal opportunities to learn. *(following students, observing classes, talking with students, teachers, meeting with students, parents, school and district administrators)*

NSES does not use technology as well as it should to support student learning. Many computers within classrooms do not work. Many printers in the computer lab do not print. Limited technical assistance exists at the district level to maintain and update computers. Additionally, teachers acknowledge they need more training to use technology as an instructional tool. Students state they would like to write reports and look up information, but they rarely go to the computer lab. All of these factors restrict student and teacher use of these valuable learning tools. *(following students, observing classes, meeting with the school improvement team, students, school and district administrators, talking with students, teachers)*

Strong parent involvement is a vital part of the NSES learning community. Parents volunteer in classrooms, participate on the school improvement team, attend workshops offered by teachers and contribute to the effective running of the school. They read with their children at home and help them with their homework. Teachers provide training for parents so that they can productively assist in the classrooms. Consequently, this strong partnership promotes learning both inside and outside the school. *(following students, observing classes, observing the school outside the classroom, meeting with the school improvement team, students, parents, school and district administrators, talking with students, teachers, parents, and school administrators, 2004 SALT Survey report, reviewing school improvement plan)*

Commendations for North Smithfield Elementary School

Strong, effective school leadership

Scheduled time during the school day for teacher collaboration and planning

Effective, full inclusion

Trained, supportive parental involvement

Recommendations for North Smithfield Elementary School

Continue to schedule time during the school day to look at student work and discuss teaching practices. Inform the school improvement team to ensure monitoring of student progress.

Develop a new format for the school improvement plan. Amend the plan to reflect the learning needs of students accurately. Monitor implementation of action steps to determine their effectiveness. Ensure all teachers receive the plan in its entirety.

Continue to support the inclusion model that currently is in place, and implement it.

Find and attend professional development in the effective use of available technology. Utilize the computer lab more extensively.

Continue to communicate with and provide training for parent volunteers.

Recommendations for North Smithfield School Department

Complete the search to fill district administrative vacancies.

Continue to support the full inclusion model currently in place.

Provide district wide professional development in the effective use of technology. Provide technological support to maintain and update equipment.

Complete the work on district initiatives, including the teacher evaluation tool, the standards-based report card and curricula development.

7. FINAL ADVICE TO NORTH SMITHFIELD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

The SALT team recognizes and acknowledges the hard work and dedication of the NSES community. We commend the value you place on continued learning. Your inclusion program and your focus on continued differentiation of instruction enables all students to succeed.

While you enjoy the classification of a high performing and sustaining school, such continued designation will require your significant attention to mathematics. Use your cohesiveness as a staff to support one another while you move forward into less comfortable areas of instruction. Expand your passion for literacy to include math, and improve teaching and learning in this area. Work together to incorporate the principles of the *Everyday Math* program so that you create a strong math foundation for your students. Continue to attend professional development sessions, and share and discuss student work with your colleagues to improve student learning in math. Your students will only benefit.

Literacy is your true strength. The vast resources, knowledge and time you dedicate to this area inspires students, as well as the SALT team, to become lifelong readers. Capitalize on your students' love of writing. Encourage them to show their originality, creativity and personal voice in their work.

The SALT team acknowledges the discontent among the staff. Address these issues head on, and set your course to achieve greater levels of success. Take advantage of decision-making opportunities so that all voices are heard. The spirit of cooperation and collaboration within grade levels needs to expand to include school leadership.

We wish you well as you continue to grow as learners.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The steps Catalpa completed for this review were:

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

The findings from the review are:

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

Accordingly, Catalpa Ltd. endorses this report.



Thomas A. Wilson, EdD

Catalpa Ltd.

February 28, 2005

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 North Smithfield Elementary 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 North Smithfield Elementary School.

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

- ◆ *direct classroom observation*
- ◆ *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*
- ◆ *interviewing teachers about the work of their students*
- ◆ *analyzing state assessment results as reported in Information Works!*
- ◆ *reviewing the following documents:*
 - district and school policies and practices*
 - records of professional development activities*
 - classroom assessments*
 - school improvement plan for North Smithfield Elementary School*
 - district strategic plan*
 - 2003-4 SALT Survey report*
 - classroom textbooks*
 - 2003 Information Works!*
 - 2004 New Standards Reference Examination School Summaries*
 - 2004 Rhode Island Writing Assessment results*

School and District Report Cards

Teacher Evaluation Instrument

Writing Rubrics 2003-2004

Principals' and Teachers' Newsletters

School Safety Plans

Results of North Smithfield's Follow A Student Activity 03, 04

Results of North Smithfield's Looking at Student Work Activity 03-04

Parent-Teacher Handbook

North Smithfield's Teacher Growth, Supervision and Evaluation Policy

Math Rubrics 2003-2004

State Assessment Results for North Smithfield Elementary 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:

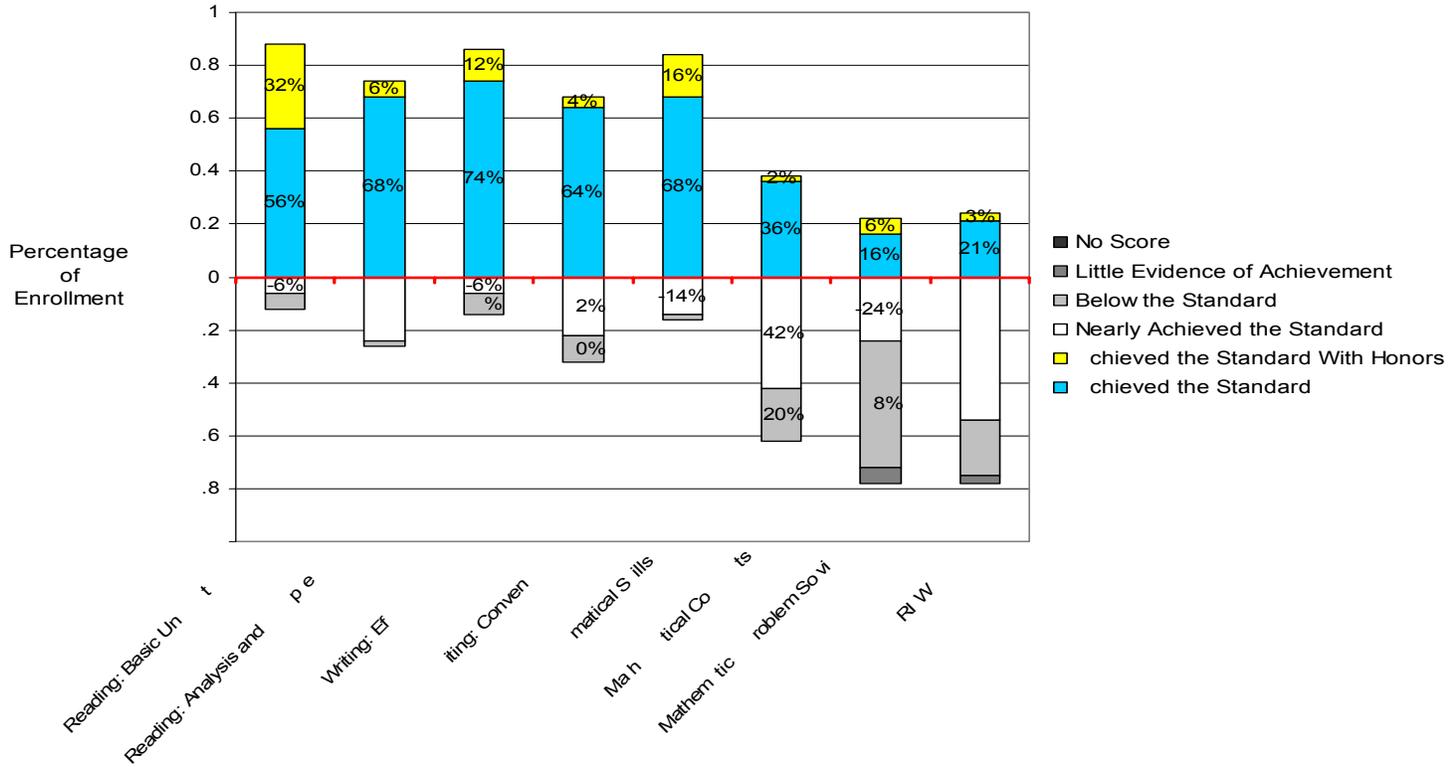
- ◆ *against performance standards;*
- ◆ *compared to similar students in the state;*
- ◆ *across student groups within the school;*
- ◆ *and over time.*

RESULTS IN RELATION TO PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

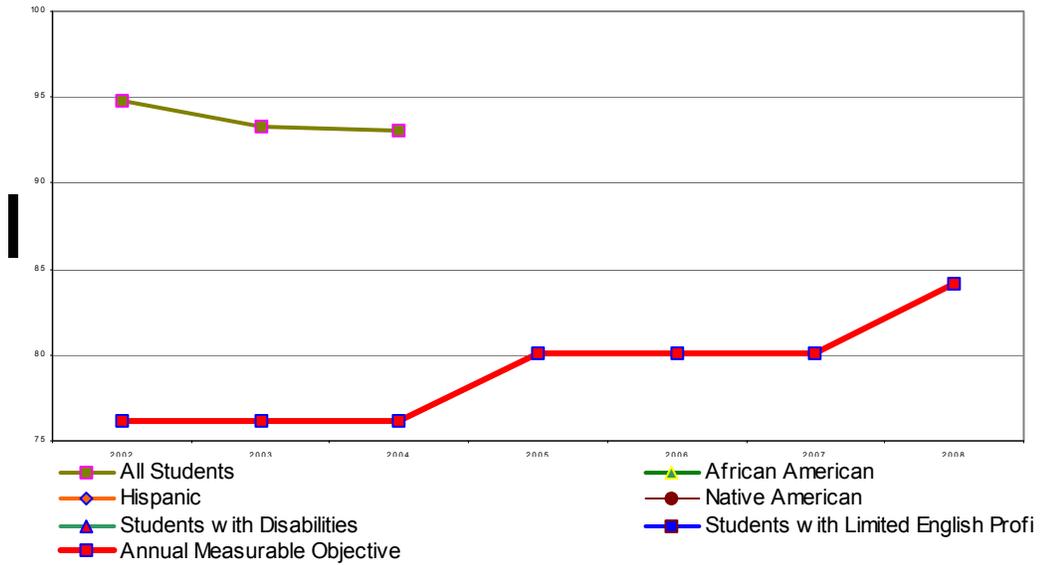
The first display shows how well the students do in relation to standards in English/Language Arts and mathematics. Student results are shown as the percentage of students taking the test whose score places them in the various categories at, above, or below the performance standard. Endorsed by the Board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

Table 1. 2002-03 Student Results on Rhode Island State Assessments

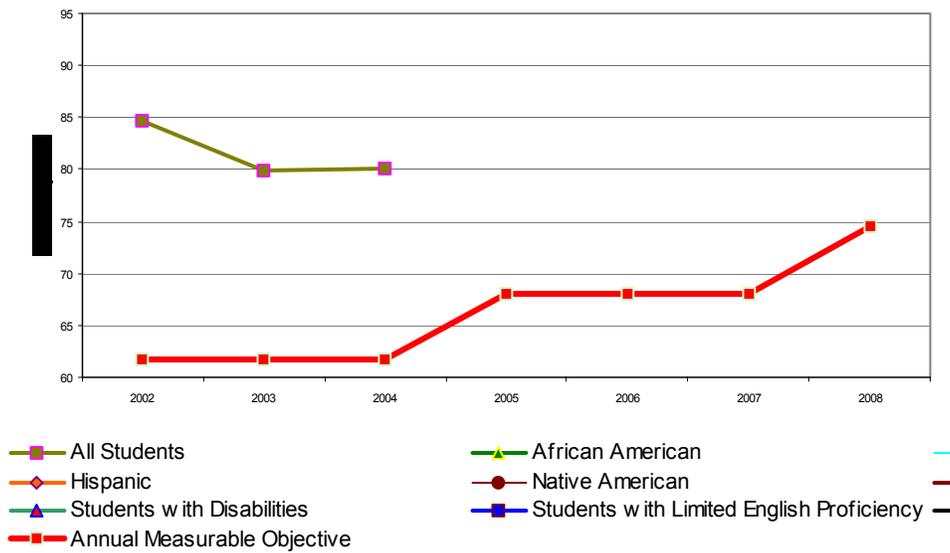
North Smithfield Elementary School State Assessment Results of 2004



Annual Proficiency, North Smithfield Elementary School, ELA, Gr. 4



Annual Proficiency, North Smithfield Elementary School, Gr. 4 Math



REPORT CARD FOR NORTH SMITHFIELD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

This Report Card show the performance of North Smithfield Elementary School compared to the school’s annual measurable objectives (AMO).

These report card scores describe North Smithfield Elementary School as a high performing, sustaining school.

Table 3. Report Card for North Smithfield Elementary School

2004 Rhode Island School Report Card

RI SCHOOL: NORTH SMITHFIELD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

RI DISTRICT: NORTH SMITHFIELD

INDEX PROFICIENCY SCORE, 2002-04	ENGLISH LANG. ARTS				MATHEMATICS			
	THIS SCHOOL	TARGET MET?	THIS DISTRICT	THE STATE	THIS SCHOOL	TARGET MET?	THIS DISTRICT	THE STATE
	TARGET SCORE: 76.1				TARGET SCORE: 61.7			
All Students	93.3	YES	91.2	86.1	80	YES	79.3	77.5
African Americans	*	YES	*	77.8	*	YES	*	65.9
Asian	*	YES	*	84.5	*	YES	*	77.1
Hispanic	*	YES	*	75.8	*	YES	*	65.8
Native Americans	*	YES	*	83.9	*	YES	*	73
White	93.5	YES	91.3	88.5	80.7	YES	79.7	82
Students with Disabilities	*	YES	75.8	69.5	*	YES	66.4	66.4
Students with Limited English Proficiency	*	YES	*	68.9	*	YES	*	61
Students who are Economically Disadvantaged	*	YES	*	77.8	*	YES	*	68.4

PERCENT OF STUDENTS TESTED, 2002-04	Target: 95%				ATTENDANCE RATE	Target: 90%			
	THIS SCHOOL	TARGET MET?	THIS DISTRICT	THE STATE		THIS SCHOOL	TARGET MET?	THIS DISTRICT	THE STATE
English Language Arts	100	YES	100	99.1	96.1	YES	96	94.8	
Mathematics	99.3	YES	99.8	99.4					

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

THIS SCHOOL IS CLASSIFIED AS:

High Performing and Sustaining

Information Works! data for North Smithfield Elementary School is available at <http://www.rido.net>.

THE NORTH SMITHFIELD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT TEAM

Carolyn Frayne Principal	D. Lough Parent
Diane Jolin Vice-principal	L. Thompson Parent
P. Winters SIT chair Reading Specialist	B. Leclerc Parent
J. Gornie ASK Director	K. Gaulin Resource
C. Bonas School Committee Member	K. Whalen Parent
T. Lafreniere Reading Specialist Interim Reading Coordinator	D. Gardner Resource/DPT Teacher
M. Hanoian Parent	T. Campella Grade 1 Teacher
J. Gaulin Grade 2 Teacher	C. Carpenter Grade 1 Teacher
M.C. Watier Clerk	B. Hawkins Reading Specialist
P. Votta Parent	C. Derosier Grade 1 Teacher
A. McKay Art Teacher	K. Simonelli Grade 3 Teacher
J. Mowry Parent	B. Horley Grade 3 Teacher
J. Foster Grade 1 Teacher	M. Dupuis Grade 2 Teacher

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 Regents SALT Fellow
Team Chair

Carrie Chasse
Grade 3/4 Inclusion Teacher
Leo Savoie Elementary School
Woonsocket, Rhode Island

Nicole Daniels
Integrated Grade 1
Fairlawn Early Learning Center
Lincoln, Rhode Island

Trudy Grow
Grade 2 Teacher
Cumberland Hill Elementary School
Cumberland, Rhode Island

Charlotte Josephs
Principal
Woodridge Elementary School
Cranston, Rhode Island

Virginia St. Germain
Reading Specialist
Northern Lincoln Early Learning Center
Lincoln, Rhode Island

Joanne Squillante
Special Education
La Perche Elementary School
Smithfield, Rhode Island

Jim Zanfini
Grade 2 Teacher
Saylesville Elementary School
Lincoln, Rhode Island