



Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education  
www.ridoe.net

# Byfield School

BRISTOL

## THE SALT VISIT TEAM REPORT

November 2, 2001



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 on Conducting a 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).

**Rhode Island Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education**

James A. DiPrete, Chairman  
Jo Eva Gaines, Vice Chair  
Colleen Callahan, Secretary  
Representative Paul W. Crowley  
Sue P. Duff  
Senator Hanna M. Gallo  
Gary E. Grove  
Patrick A. Guida  
Mario A. Mancieri  
Vidal P. Perez

**Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education**

Peter McWalters, Commissioner

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

For information about SALT, please contact Ken Fish at 401-222-4600, x 2200 or [salt@ridoe.net](mailto:salt@ridoe.net).

This report is available at <http://www.ridoe.net/schoolimprove/salt>

**1. THE PURPOSE AND LIMITS OF THIS REPORT**

*OVERVIEW*

*SOURCES OF EVIDENCE FOR THIS REPORT*

*USING THE REPORT*

**2. PROFILE OF BYFIELD SCHOOL**

*BACKGROUND*

*STATE ASSESSMENT RESULTS FOR BYFIELD SCHOOL*

**3. PORTRAIT OF BYFIELD SCHOOL AT THE TIME OF THE VISIT****4. FINDINGS ON STUDENT LEARNING**

*SOURCES OF EVIDENCE*

*CONCLUSIONS*

*COMMENDATIONS FOR BYFIELD SCHOOL*

*RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BYFIELD SCHOOL*

**5. FINDINGS ON TEACHING**

*SOURCES OF EVIDENCE*

*CONCLUSIONS*

*COMMENDATIONS FOR BYFIELD SCHOOL*

*RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BYFIELD SCHOOL*

*RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BRISTOL WARREN REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT*

## **6. FINDINGS ON THE SCHOOL**

*SOURCES OF EVIDENCE*

*CONCLUSIONS*

*COMMENDATIONS FOR BYFIELD SCHOOL*

*RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BYFIELD SCHOOL*

*RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BRISTOL WARREN REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT*

*RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BRISTOL WARREN TEACHERS UNION*

## **7. FINAL ADVICE TO THE SCHOOL**

*BYFIELD SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT TEAM*

*THE SALT VISIT TEAM*

*NEW STANDARDS REFERENCE EXAMINATION AND RI WRITING ASSESSMENT RESULTS (2001)*

*ENDORSEMENT OF SALT VISIT TEAM REPORT*



# 1. THE PURPOSE AND LIMITS OF THIS REPORT

## Overview

This is the report of the SALT team that visited Byfield School from October 29, 2001 through November 2, 2001. 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 chooses deliberately the words that convey its message best 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 SALT report creates accountability for improvement by directly connecting its judgments of quality and its recommendations for improvement 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 protocol and that this report meets all criteria required for a legitimate SALT visit report.

The visit team is made up of teachers, an administrator, and a parent 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 examined test scores, student work, and other documents related to this school. The school improvement plan for Byfield 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 Byfield School.

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

- ◆ *observing a total of 54 classrooms. The team spent a total of over 68.5 hours in direct classroom observation. Every classroom was visited at least once, and almost every teacher was observed more than once.*
- ◆ *observing the school outside of the classroom*
- ◆ *following five 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 the school administrator*
- ◆ *reviewing completed and ongoing student work*
  - ◆ *interviewing teachers about the work of their students*
  - ◆ *analyzing three years of state assessment results as reported in Information Works!*

- ◆ observing the team meeting assembly
- ◆ reviewing the following documents:

*records of professional development activities*  
*classroom assessments*  
*classroom assignments*

*student portfolios*

*school improvement plan for Byfield School*

*self-study documents*

*district strategic plan*  
*1999-2000 SALT Survey report*  
*classroom textbooks*  
*1998, 1999, 2000, and 2001 Information Works!*  
*1999, 2000, and 2001 Rhode Island Writing Assessment results*  
*Math Performance Assessment Project 2000*  
*Byfield School SALT Portfolio*  
*5th Quarter Summer Program documentation*  
*Bristol Warren Regional School Reading/Language Arts Draft Curriculum revised 2001*  
*district report card*  
*Bristol Warren Regional School Professional Assessment and Development System Document*  
*Healthy School! Healthy Kids! Program documentation*  
*Byfield Buddies Notebook*

The full team built the conclusions, commendations, and recommendations presented here through intense and thorough discussion. The team met for a total of 26 hours in six separate meetings spanning the four days of the visit. This time is exclusive of the time spent in classrooms, with teachers, and in meetings with students, parents, and school and district administrators.

The team 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 chooses deliberately the words, phrases, and sentences it uses 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 the importance to the school of what the team said and why, the school takes its first step in becoming accountable in a way that actually improves learning.

It is important to read and consider this report 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 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 BYFIELD SCHOOL**

### **Background**

Byfield School is one of seven elementary schools in the Bristol Warren Regional Public School System. It serves students in grades Kindergarten through grade three in Bristol, Rhode Island, which has a population of approximately 23,000. The present school first opened its doors to students in 1872. The building was named for Nathaniel Byfield, one of the founding fathers of Bristol. It originally served students in grades K-6. Since its construction, interior space has been reorganized to meet the evolving needs of the students served by this school. Byfield became a K-3 school in the late 1980s.

A nine-member elected school committee, comprised of six Bristol residents and three Warren residents, governs the Bristol Warren Regional Public School District. A town administrator and a five-member town council govern the town of Bristol. A joint financial committee approves the school budget, which is then brought back to the respective town councils for approval. Byfield School students are served by a professional staff of one administrator, 20 full-time and part-time faculty, one secretary, two building aides, and one custodian.

Of the 160 students attending this school 98.5 percent are White, .5 percent are Asian/Pacific Islander, and 1 percent are Black. Twenty-three students, totaling 14.5 percent, receive special education services; no students are Limited English Proficiency; and 38 percent applied for and receive free or reduced-price lunch.

During the 2000-2001 school year, Byfield School has been engaged in a number of initiatives to support and complement the school's efforts to improve student performance. These initiatives include: parent involvement in Math / Science Night, Reading Night, and Story Night; programs focusing on balanced literacy, accelerated reader, summer reading program; grants for VSA Arts; the Comprehensive School Health Technical Grant; and ongoing research-based projects.

Presently, there are two half-day kindergartens, three first grades, two second grades, and two third grades in this school. In 1999 Bristol Warren Regional School District reorganized its elementary schools. Two schools were closed, the Arts Magnet School was opened, and one elementary school was completely renovated. These changes had an impact on the demographics of Byfield School.

### **State Assessment Results for Byfield School**

On the 2001 Rhode Island Writing Assessment approximately one in four of the 3rd graders (26%) met or exceeded the standard.

The most recently available state testing results have been appended to this report. *Information Works!* data for Byfield School is available at [www.ridoe.net](http://www.ridoe.net).

### **3. PORTRAIT OF BYFIELD SCHOOL AT THE TIME OF THE VISIT**

Byfield is historic school located in the central part of Bristol. The warmth and history of this charming Mansard-roofed three-story school can be felt immediately as you enter the foyer and see the escalating stairs, high ceilings, and wooden floors. It is a long way up to the top floor for third graders, but they get there in an orderly manner. They are greeted all along the way by signs that remind them that the “Byfield Way” is Cooperation, Respect, and Behavior and to “Always do your very best.” School pride and school spirit are felt and displayed throughout the halls.

Teachers are dedicated, creative, and nurturing; they make Byfield School a student-centered learning community where children feel safe to learn and grow. The warm, caring attitudes of the students, teachers, staff, and principal are readily apparent. Each classroom is buzzing with energy as students become engaged in their reading and writing activities. Students take ownership of their learning and teachers adeptly facilitate the many processes of learning.

Byfield School is a learning community where adults and children learn and grow. All parties actively cultivate a culture of caring and respect, and students and faculty work together as team members to produce positive learning outcomes. Although it is an old, historical building, the teaching here reflects current research-based practices. The teachers have high expectations for students and communicate them to students. These academic and behavioral expectations are positively impacting the students that attend Byfield School.

Under the active and supportive leadership of the recently appointed principal, this learning community has willingly embarked on a journey of continuous improvement. Teachers are making great strides to acquire and implement instructional techniques to ensure that their students will be able to attain high academic standards. They are actively working to implement an abundance of changes: standards, rubrics, traits of writing, balanced reading framework, portfolios, and math problem solving, among others. Many of these practices, however, are still emerging on a school-wide basis. Helping all children achieve at high levels will require ongoing job-embedded professional development, expanding effective standards-based practices schoolwide, and a more consistent and coordinated school-wide approach to mathematics.

The facilities at this 129 year-old school are in need of on-going repair, maintenance, and upgrade. Despite the obstacles presented by this facility, the faculty and staff continue their attempts to maintain momentum toward improving their students’ achievement. In essence, Byfield School is in the middle stages of an ongoing cycle of change and growth. It is a school that is committed to improving and reorganizing to better meet the needs of the students it serves.

## 4. FINDINGS ON STUDENT LEARNING

### Sources of Evidence

- ◆ *following students*
- ◆ *observing the school outside of the classroom*
- ◆ *reviewing completed and ongoing student work*
- ◆ *meetings with the school improvement team, students, school and district administrators, and parents*
- ◆ *talking with students, teachers, and staff*
- ◆ *interviewing teachers about the work of their students*
  - ◆ *reviewing student portfolios*
  - ◆ *observing classes*
  - ◆ *observing team meeting assembly*

### Conclusions

The students at Byfield School know what is expected of them academically and behaviorally. They are polite, courteous, friendly, and respectful to adults and to one another. These students are happy to be in this school. They possess team spirit and camaraderie. Their positive behavior contributes to an atmosphere where various kinds of learning can and does take place. (*following students, observing classes, observing the school outside of the classroom, talking with students, teachers, and staff, meetings with the school improvement team, students, parents, and school administrator*)

Students interact well as part of a learning community. With minimal prompting, they know what materials they need to perform classroom tasks and become fully engaged. Students demonstrate an understanding of themselves as learners. They use a variety of self-management tools—word walls, picture dictionaries, writers’ resources, rubrics, checklists, and theme-based word banks—to improve the quality of their work. Many students effectively work in pairs and small groups to pool their collective knowledge thereby extending and refining the knowledge of each individual group member. They frequently evaluate their work individually and with peers, most often in reading and writing. Through the Partners in Education program, upper grade students pair with lower grade students in math, reading, and writing. (*observing team meeting assembly, observing classes, following students, talking with students and teachers*)

Students embrace the opportunity to engage in the writing process—brainstorming, pre-writing, drafting, editing, revising, and publishing. Consistent use of the writing process is evident in the work students produce and enhances its overall quality. Students are writing observations, procedural writing, journal writing, writing logs, writing predictions, writing letters, and responding to literature. Many students demonstrate knowledge of grade-level appropriate grammar and conventions in peer-editing and self-editing processes. In general, the students write well. They write daily using a variety of formats, but they are still developing their proficiency with voice, adding vivid and supporting details, staying focused on the main idea, and writing creatively. Students produce published books, and they share their writing with other students. Students are better at constructing simple grammatically correct sentences than using style, syntax, vocabulary, word choice, and other literary devices to produce detailed and engaging writing. *(reviewing student portfolios, observing classes, following students, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, talking with students and teachers, interviewing teachers about the work of their students)*

Students love to read, and they look forward to the structured time for reading. They read independently selected texts at home and at school. Students maintain reading logs to track both the quantity and quality of what they read. Most students in all grades effectively use a variety of strategies—chunking, context clues, picture clues, word attack skills, among others—to decode words. This forms a basis for reading that many students effectively use to comprehend text at a literal level. Fewer students can compare and contrast, make connections between different pieces of literature, analyze the author's purpose, analyze and interpret text, and support assertions with convincing textual references. *(reviewing student portfolios, observing classes, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, interviewing teachers about the work of their students, following students, talking with students and teachers, meetings with school and district administrators)*

Many students can perform basic mathematical computations and recall math facts. They are adept with time, money, place value, and one-to-one correspondence. Students are creating math graphs, bar graphs, and picture graphs. Some students from different grades collaborate for math activities. Manipulatives (money, clocks, dice, etc) and math tool-kits are used to reinforce their understanding of mathematical skills and concepts. Some students complete daily math messages that include skills and problem solving and can relate mathematics to their everyday lives. Few students can independently select and apply multiple strategies to solve complex problems. Additionally, they have difficulty communicating their mathematical thinking in written and oral form. *(talking with students and teachers, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, reviewing student portfolios, observing classes, interviewing teachers about the work of their students, meetings with the school improvement team, school and district administrators, and parents)*

**Commendations for Byfield School**

The polite, courteous, and friendly students

The respect students have for adults and each other

The joy students have for learning

Student use of a variety of self-management tools

**Recommendations for Byfield School**

Increase students' proficiency with using style, syntax, vocabulary, word choice, and other literary devices to produce detailed and engaging writing.

Increase students' proficiency to compare and contrast, make connections between different pieces of literature, analyze the author's purpose, support assertions with convincing textual references, and other advanced literary skills.

Further develop students' proficiency with mathematical skills, concepts, and problems solving.

Provide additional opportunities for students to demonstrate their mathematical thinking orally, in writing, and kinesthetically.

Disaggregate the fourth grade New Standards Reference Examination test results for Byfield students attending Colt-Andrews School and use that to inform the scope and sequence of curricula.

## 5. FINDINGS ON TEACHING

### Sources of Evidence

- ◆ *observing classes*
- ◆ *observing the school outside of the classroom*
- ◆ *talking with students, teachers, and staff*
- ◆ *interviewing teachers about the work of their students*
- ◆ *meetings with the school improvement team, students, school and district administrators, and parents*
- ◆ *following students*
- ◆ *reviewing student portfolios*
- ◆ *reviewing completed and ongoing student work*
- ◆ *reviewing classroom assignments*
  - ◆ *reviewing classroom assessments*

### Conclusions

Teachers work hard; they are extremely dedicated and professional. They are nurturing, caring, and undoubtedly have the best interests of their students at heart. They actively work to improve their professional practice to meet more effectively the needs of their students. They are knowledgeable of their subject matter, as well as research-based teaching practices and techniques. Teachers truly understand the writing process and know how to inspire children to write. They foster a love of reading in their students in and out of school. To help achieve these ends they pooled their Book Fair money to buy a collection of leveled books for use within the school. (*observing the school outside of the classroom, talking with students, teachers, and staff, following students, meetings with students, school and district administrators, and parents, observing classes*)

Improving the quality of writing is clearly a focus of teachers. Teachers model conventional writing practices and have students write in different genres. Teachers use clear criteria by which to evaluate students' work. Teachers emphasize on a daily basis the proper grammar, spelling, punctuation, and conventions needed for various forms of writing. They encourage the use of a variety of webbing and brainstorming strategies to effectively guide and shape the development of student writing. Teachers inspire children to be authors by publishing and sharing student writing. To increase the children's writing effectiveness some teachers are embedding the traits of writing—ideas, organization, word choice, sentence fluidity, a voice, and conventions—into the writing process. Fewer classroom tasks and writing assignments require students to develop the literary devices necessary to extend beyond basic literacy and to acquire the habits and strategies of skillful writers. (*reviewing classroom assessments, observing classes, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, reviewing student portfolios, following students*)

Teachers exert considerable effort to improve students' reading proficiency. Teachers are emphasizing the requisite skills students need to attack and decode words. In order to increase student reading comprehension, they are incorporating many of the tenets of a balanced reading program. As part of Readers Workshop, a common approach found in classrooms, teachers frequently conference with students during independent reading to assess their proficiency with reading strategies, their reading fluency, as well as their reading comprehension. Teachers use running records, high-frequency words word lists, and other diagnostic tools to assess student reading proficiency; they group students who have similar reading needs. Teachers throughout the school consistently use shared reading, read alouds, independent reading, and guided reading to improve student performance. A few teachers expand on these sound practices by having students engage in sophisticated analysis of text such as: making perceptive and well developed connections, explaining the motives of characters, talking about the author's craft, and considering the function of point of view and persona. *(observing classes, following students, talking with students and teachers, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, meetings with the school and district administrators, interviewing teachers about the work of their students, reviewing classroom assessments)*

The teaching of mathematics is inconsistent throughout the school. Teachers are focusing on counting, patterning, regrouping, adding and subtracting, and basic computational operations. A few teachers are effectively focusing on mathematical problem solving. Many teachers are substituting some components of the existing mathematics program, Everyday Mathematics, with materials created by individual teachers. Consequently, the current schoolwide approach to mathematics does not efficiently spiral or build on students' prior knowledge. *(reviewing student portfolios, observing classes, reviewing classroom assessments, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, meetings with the school improvement team, school and district administrators, talking with students and teachers, interviewing teachers about the work of their students, reviewing classroom assignments)*

Many teachers are incorporating standards into their classroom tasks and assessments. Although they have received little formal training, most teachers are working to develop the learning represented by the standards. Teachers do an exemplary job of consistently providing oral feedback to children. They routinely conference with children, offering guidance on how children can improve their work and encouraging children to produce their best work. Specific, prescriptive written comments are less prevalent on student work. Additionally, all teachers are using rubrics to guide the creation of student work, as well as to communicate to students their expectations of what good work looks like. Teachers exert exemplary time and effort creating and using holistic rubrics for each grade. The limited use of analytical rubrics and tasks tailored to specific performance indicators aligned with standards confines teachers and students' ability to ascertain productively the quality of their work. *(following students, observing classes, reviewing classroom assessments, reviewing classroom assignments, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, meetings with parents, students, and school and district administrators)*

**Commendations for Byfield School**

Extremely dedicated and hard-working teachers

Creating and using rubrics for each grade

Fostering a love for reading

Implementing the Balanced Reading Program

**Recommendations for Byfield School**

Increase the frequency of classroom tasks and the number of writing assignments that require students to develop the sophisticated literary devices necessary to acquire the habits and strategies of skillful writers.

Expand the use of the traits of writing schoolwide.

Assess the current implementation of the mathematics program and mathematics instruction. Ensure that teaching of mathematics successfully and consistently spirals and builds on students' mathematical knowledge from year-to-year.

Intensify the direct teaching of mathematical problem-solving strategies.

Devise and use, when appropriate, analytical rubrics with a clear and definitive link to the bullets (performance indicators) delineated in the standards.

Expand schoolwide the emphasis on sophisticated analysis of text such as: making perceptive and well-developed connections, explaining the motives of characters, talking about the author's craft, and considering the function of point of view and persona.

Provide professional development on designing standards-based tasks and assessments directly linked to standards, as well as training that focuses on teaching and assessing higher order thinking processes in reading, writing, and math.

Increase the frequency and quality of prescriptive written comments designed to improve specific parts of student work.

**Recommendations for Bristol Warren Regional School District**

Provide the resources and technical assistance necessary to support ongoing changes in professional practice at Byfield School.

## 6. FINDINGS ON THE SCHOOL

### Sources of Evidence

- ◆ *observing classes*
- ◆ *reviewing classroom assignments*
- ◆ *reviewing portfolios*
- ◆ *observing the school outside of the classroom*
- ◆ *talking with many students, teachers, staff, and school administrator*
- ◆ *meetings with the school improvement team, students, school and district administrators, parents*
  - ◆ *following students*
- ◆ *reviewing school improvement plan for Byfield School*
  - ◆ *reviewing self-study documents*
- ◆ *reviewing Byfield School SALT Portfolio*
- ◆ *reviewing 5th Quarter Summer Program documentation*
  - ◆ *reviewing Bristol Warren Regional School Reading/Language Arts Draft Curriculum revised 2001*
- ◆ *reviewing district report card*
- ◆ *reviewing Bristol Warren Regional School Professional Assessment and Development System Document*
  - ◆ *reviewing Healthy Schools! Healthy Kids! Program documentation*
  - ◆ *1999-2000 SALT Survey report*

### Conclusions

The staff, teachers, and school principal have worked to cultivate a safe, healthy environment built on high expectations for cooperation, respect, and behavior. Children and adults are proud to call themselves members of the Byfield School community. That everyone feels safe and comfortable here is evident in the way they move through the building and happily interact with each other in a friendly manner. Students rise to the clearly stated and modeled expectations of the staff, teachers, and principal. Parents represent a growing group of active partners in the academic and social development of their children. To promote a safe, healthy, and nurturing school community, Byfield is participating for a second year in the Healthy Schools! Healthy Kids! Program. (*review of Healthy Schools! Healthy Kids! documentation, observing the school outside of the classroom, observing classes, talking with students, teachers, staff, and the school administrator, meetings with the school improvement team, students, school administrator, and parents*)

Byfield School is working to inform and involve parents in their children's education. Parents are extremely pleased with the willingness of the principal and faculty to work with them in multiple ways—particularly with their open door policy and having a teacher “chairperson” present at monthly parent group meetings. To increase the parental involvement in and support for Byfield School, the parent group is presently working hard to implement monthly events such as the Welcome Breakfast, Macaroni Supper, Yard Sale and Kids Fair in which local community businesses become involved. Current parental involvement, though growing as a result of these outreach efforts, is limited. *(meetings with the school improvement team, school administrator, parents, and students, talking with students and teachers, reviewing Byfield School SALT Portfolio)*

The teachers at Byfield are risk takers, who have a demonstrated willingness and desire to seek out professional development to enhance their teaching craft. They willingly share with each other, learn from each other, and desire more time to engage in professional development. The absence of professional development days in the academic school year impedes the professional growth and development of teachers. Similarly, the current teacher evaluation instrument and district mentoring program ineffectively support and improve the professional practices of teachers. *(meetings with the school and district administrators, and parents, reviewing Bristol Warren Regional School Professional Assessment and Development System Document, talking with students, teachers, and staff, observing classes, SALT Survey 1999-2000)*

Byfield School is working to meet the diverse literacy needs of the children that attend the school. Teachers are working toward a co-teaching model that involves classroom, resource, and literacy teachers. Some powerful examples of whole group co-teaching between and among these teachers are occurring in this school. A few teachers from different grades work with each other to reinforce student-to-student tutoring and support cooperative learning among children. Moreover, resource and reading recovery teachers are coordinating with classroom teachers to integrate their curricula and reinforce the learning that takes place in these individual settings. These effective practices are not occurring frequently enough schoolwide. Correspondingly, the district recently implemented a ramp-up program—the 5th Quarter Summer Program—to meet the diverse learning needs of participating students. This new five-week summer program focuses primarily on improving literacy with a secondary focus on numeracy. *(meetings with school and district administrators, observing classes, following students, talking with teachers, reviewing Byfield School SALT Portfolio, reviewing 5th Quarter Summer Program documentation)*

The school and district are beginning to support the implementation of standards-based education in a coordinated manner. The district recently redesigned the report card to be aligned to standards. It is also developing a K-12 Reading/Language Arts curriculum including grade-level indicators of performance based on the National Center on Education and the Economy New Standards Performance Indicators. Additionally, Byfield teachers are beginning to use a portfolio system that complements the new report card and compiles information about student learning and growth in four broad areas—print sound code, writing, reading, and mathematics. The teachers' implementation of this record keeping system is still emerging, as well as its potential effectiveness. These efforts support the implementation of standards-based literacy instruction. Conversely, the lack of a formal standards-based mathematics curriculum and inconsistent implementation of the mathematics program at Byfield School is impeding the successful development of student proficiency in mathematics. *(reviewing Bristol Warren Regional School Reading/Language Arts Draft Curriculum revised 2001, observing classes, reviewing classroom assignments, reviewing student portfolios, reviewing district report card, meetings with school and district administrators, talking with teachers)*

The school improvement plan for Byfield School addresses an array of goals broadly focused on improving literacy, increasing parental involvement, upgrading the facilities, and demonstrating respectful and appropriate behaviors. It places less emphasis on goals and tactics specifically designed to assess students' current achievement and to subsequently close gaps in performance. Similarly, the absence of definitive completion dates with measurable targets limits the school's ability to determine when it has successfully completed the stated goals. Furthermore, in developing this plan the school engaged in self-study activities that remain a valuable by-product of the school improvement process. *(reviewing school improvement plan, reviewing self-study documents, meetings with the school improvement team and school administrator)*

### **Commendations for Byfield School**

Creating clearly stated and modeled expectations

Byfield's participation in the Healthy Schools! Healthy Kids! Program

Teachers' willingness to take risks and improve their professional practice

**Recommendations for Byfield School**

Capitalize on teachers' natural initiative and desire to better their teacher craft by continuing to encourage and support teachers to attend conferences and seminars. Provide opportunities for teachers to share their newly acquired knowledge with their peers.

Devise a formal professional development plan and include job-embedded professional development experiences focused on standards-based education, performance-based assessments, mathematics instruction, differentiated instruction, and co-teaching in an inclusion model.

Continue your efforts to ensure that parents are active partners in the academic and social education of their children.

Increase the occurrence of co-teaching between and among classroom, resource, and literacy teachers.

Expand the participation of students, where appropriate, in ramp-up programs such as the 5th Quarter Summer Program.

Examine student work in reading, writing, and math on a school-wide basis to determine student mastery of desired curricula content.

Revisit the existing school improvement plan and add additional goals and tactics with definitive deadlines specifically to close gaps in student performance. Use the information generated by this report and the recommended analysis of student work when revising your school improvement plan.

Continue using self-study activities to inform the strategic direction of the school.

**Recommendations for Bristol Warren Regional School District**

Negotiate with the Bristol Warren Teachers Union to add professional development days to the academic calendar to support the professional development needs of teachers.

Revisit and further develop the district-mentoring program.

Work with the Bristol Warren Teachers Union to revise the teacher evaluation system so it is an effective tool for evaluating teachers and improving their standards-based professional practices.

Devise a standards-based K-12 mathematics curriculum designed to develop in students the learning represented by the standards and to close gaps in the mathematics program and its current implementation.

Broaden the focus of the 5th Quarter Summer Program to include a more in-depth concentration on numeracy.

**Recommendations for Bristol Warren Teachers Union**

Negotiate with the Bristol Warren Regional School Committee to add professional development days to the academic calendar to support the professional development needs of your members.

Work with the school committee to revise the teacher evaluation system so it is an effective tool for evaluating teachers and improving their standards-based professional practices.

## **7. FINAL ADVICE TO THE SCHOOL**

Byfield is a unique school that is obviously on the right track toward becoming an outstanding school that fosters educational excellence and life-long learners. The whole school community has grown academically, socially, and professionally since the addition of a full-time principal; your efforts and achievements are well noted.

Your principal, faculty, and students possess tremendous school pride and spirit. Build on that sense of pride and shared ownership for the well-being of your students. Continue cultivating the existing family-school connections and work to expand the number of parents participating in their children's education.

Take time to reflect on all that you have accomplished. Appreciate the academic and social progress that your students have gained as a result of your efforts. Continue to provide help and guidance to each other. Individually, your strengths are formidable; together, they are indomitable.

You are willing to work hard in order to meet the needs of your students. You are doing a fine job with the children in the areas of reading and writing. Expand your focus on mathematics to a level commensurate with your concentration on literacy.

This building is a monument to your local history. Continue to preserve it so that the unique opportunities this small learning environment offers will be available to future generations.

As you work with this SALT report, we hope you realize our conclusions, commendations, and recommendations are designed to help you make this good learning community better able to meet the needs of your students. For that is, unquestionably, the intent of our team. Working together as a dedicated school, we are confident that you can continuously set goals, maintain high standards, and strive for the best quality in education. We wish you good luck in your journey of continuous improvement in the areas mentioned in this report.

## **BYFIELD SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT TEAM**

Dr. Stewart Armstrong Jr.  
Principal

Maureen Clark  
Teacher

Robin Houston  
Parent

Madlyn McArdle  
Teacher

Marilyn McFadden  
Teacher

Joy Richardson  
Teacher

Stephany Silvia  
Parent

Judy Smith  
Teacher

Lisa Travassos  
Teacher

Esther Trneny  
Parent / Community / Business Liaison

Lori Vaccaro  
Staff

## **THE SALT VISIT TEAM**

Dr. Michael S. Barnes  
Technology Education / Department Chairperson  
Ponaganset Middle / Senior High School  
Foster-Glocester, Rhode Island  
(on leave to Rhode Island Department of Education to serve as a SALT Fellow)  
Chair of the Team

Ann Flanagan  
Grade 3 Teacher  
Daniel D. Waterman School  
Cranston, Rhode Island

Rachel A. Scott  
Grade 3 Teacher  
Bernon Heights Elementary School  
Woonsocket, Rhode Island

Bonnie E. Walker  
Parent  
Portsmouth, Rhode Island

Suzette L. Wordell  
Principal  
Fort Barton School and Nonquit School  
Tiverton, Rhode Island

**NEW STANDARDS REFERENCE EXAMINATION AND RI WRITING  
ASSESSMENT RESULTS (2001)**

## ENDORSEMENT OF SALT VISIT TEAM REPORT

### Byfield School

November 16, 2001

To complete the Catalpa Ltd. report endorsement, I discussed the conduct of the visit with the Visit Chair while it was in process, and I have reviewed this report. Based on my knowledge derived from these sources of evidence, using the criteria specified in the *Endorsing SALT Visit team Reports by Catalpa Ltd.*, and using the methodology and procedures specified in the *Handbook for SALT Visit Chairs, 1<sup>st</sup> edition*), I conclude that:

1. 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.
2. The conclusions and all other content of this report meet the criteria specified for a SALT Visit report.

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



Thomas A. Wilson, EdD  
Catalpa Ltd.  
November 16, 2001