

# **SALT 360° Feedback and Evaluation Study**

## **PHASE ONE REPORT TO RIDE AND SALT LEADERSHIP**

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Prepared by:

### **The SALT Study research team**

Thomas A. Wilson Ed D, Principal Consultant to SALT  
Ann Abeille, Researcher  
Marilyn Crocker Ed D, Researcher  
Rick Richards, SALT Project Manager

This report is a product of the members of the SALT Study research team.

Its preparation represents a working partnership among their respective organizations:

Catalpa Ltd.

Learning Innovations at WestEd

Marilyn Crocker and Associates, Inc.

Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Center for Educational Leadership and School Improvement (London)

Full acknowledgements of the contributions of the many people who made it possible are in the Appendix.

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## **SECTION I: INTRODUCTION**

### **Overview**

The major sections of this report are:

1. *Introduction*
2. *Conclusions and Recommendations*

Prepared by the research team, based on thorough discussion of all study evidence and consensus agreement

3. *Sources of Evidence*

Prepared by members of the research team and independent researchers

Each source of evidence includes one or more sources of evidence documents that were prepared by designated researchers either to describe the evidence collected (e.g. reactions of a focus group, the text of the SALT visit reports) or to present that researcher's findings based on the evidence that was generated. Each source of evidence includes a description of its purpose, the activities and the evidence generating steps that were carried out.

### **Purpose of the SALT Study**

RIDE leaders who have responsibility for the implementation of SALT as the state's school accountability system are the first audience for this report.

The purpose of the SALT Study is to inform the decisions made by RIDE leadership about SALT policy and procedures. The study will generate evidence to answer questions framed by RIDE leadership, consider the potential that SALT offers RIDE, examine how SALT is perceived by key constituents, and, most importantly, provide information about how well SALT is progressing in terms of actual results in schools.

Other audiences will also find value in the reports of the SALT Study.

This deliberate loop to provide feedback for RIDE about SALT has been part of the SALT design since its inception in 1996.

## **Phase One of the SALT Study**

It is crucial that the reader understand the limitations intrinsic to phase one of the study. The research work was carried out to produce these findings, but also in order to pilot a variety of ways to collect information and form rigorous conclusions about SALT. Conducting these activities as a pilot was necessary for the development of an accurate and useful research model for feedback.

The description of each source of evidence specifies its important limitations.

The design for phase two is a major “outcome” of phase one.

## **Legitimacy of Including Both Inside and Outside Perspectives in this Study**

All four members of the research team have significant direct experience in the conduct of program evaluations, bolstered by relevant, graduate-level training. Their resumes are included in the appendix. They also have had prior experience in working with RIDE and with SALT. But the extent and nature of their past involvement varies, as does each person’s responsibility for this study:

**Rick Richards** has worked as a RIDE staff member for 14 years; he has been directly involved with SALT since its beginning. He has served as SALT project manager for over two years. He has new responsibilities to coordinate SALT with other RIDE offices.

Rick completed *Source of Evidence # 1*. He ensured that the team addressed the central concerns of RIDE and managed the logistics of the study. He chairs the SALT leadership team.

**Thomas A. Wilson** has worked as a RIDE consultant for seven years. He has been involved with the development of SALT since its beginning and has served as principal consultant to SALT for the last five years. A major focus of his work has been the development and implementation of the SALT school visit. He is a member of the SALT leadership team.

Tom has completed several major, national educational evaluations of school change projects, which are detailed in his resume. Several of these projects have been cited as advancing the art and science of program evaluation that provide feedback to school change initiatives. As principal partner of Catalpa Ltd, he has developed an international reputation for his work on the methodology of inquiry that underlies the SALT school visit.

He has responsibility for advising on the methodology of the study. Working with the full research team, he prepared the design of the pilot phase and *Source of Evidence # 4* and the work plan for the work of the consultants in *Source of Evidence # 2*. He prepared this report text.

**Marilyn Crocker** has worked as a RIDE consultant for seven years. She has completed several evaluations for SALT during its pilot phase. She has served as an external evaluator for educational programs in Rhode Island, including the RIMLE Standards Network Project, the Rhode Island Skills Commission Assessment System for Certificate of Initial Mastery (CIM), and a variety of local and district projects supported through Working Wonders. She has had no day-to-day responsibility for the design or implementation of SALT.

Marilyn is president of Marilyn Crocker & Associates, Inc. Her evaluation work on the national level includes program and organizational assessments for both universities and corporations. She has also served as evaluator of local socio-economic development projects in third world nations.

Marilyn completed *Source of Evidence # 3: Perceptions of SALT* with Ann Abeille. As a research team member, she contributed to the design of phase one and the conclusions and recommendations of this report.

**Ann Abeille** has worked as a RIDE consultant for six years. She has completed several evaluations for SALT. She has no day-to-day responsibility for the design or implementation of SALT. Besides her work on SALT, Ann has completed numerous evaluations of RIDE initiatives such as strategic planning and mentoring; this includes a 1999 statewide study, *The Status of Mentoring in Rhode Island*. She currently works with RIDE on two other statewide initiatives: 1) collaborative design, development, and training services related to the I-Plan process of educator certification and 2)

collaborative design of program approval standards for alternative certification programs for secondary teachers.

Ann is director of research and evaluation at Learning Innovations at WestEd. In the area of school accountability, in 2000 she served as the principal investigator for a study of the use of statewide testing results by schools and districts in Massachusetts; the Massachusetts Education Reform Review Commission (MERRC) funded this. She currently leads two other research studies supported by MERRC (one on teacher supply and demand, and one on leadership challenges in Massachusetts).

Ann completed *Source of Evidence # 3: Perceptions of SALT* with Marilyn Crocker. As a research team member, she contributed to the design of phase one and the conclusions and recommendations of this report.

The legitimacy and value of findings produced by a team that is both “internal” and “external” to the workings of RIDE and SALT can spark endless debate.

The phase two design will consider this issue in more depth, as it considers the validity and reliability in the SALT method.

### **How Much Weight should RIDE Leadership Give this Report?**

RIDE leadership should give this report whatever weight it thinks it deserves.

RIDE will make a number of decisions in the next year that will prove vital to SALT’s effectiveness and success as a new state-based accountability system. While this report has important limitations, RIDE should use it as fully as it finds useful to promote productive discussion and informed decisions about SALT.

The SALT leadership team, some directors and the commissioners reviewed a working draft of this report before it was made final. The nature of this type of feedback research makes such review necessary for both legitimacy and usefulness.

## **SECTION II CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Introduction**

Based on their thorough review of the sources of evidence and their knowledge of SALT and school change, the SALT Study research team prepared these conclusions, which represent their initial judgments about what is important for RIDE to consider at this time.

### **Conclusions**

#### **CONCLUSION 1. SALT HAS MADE A SUBSTANTIAL START.**

The initial decisions to develop and implement SALT as the department's school accountability system were made in fall 1996 and formalized by the state legislature in Article 31 and by the Board of Regents, which unanimously adopted the Principles of SALT. Since that time, the department has made substantial and rather remarkable progress in developing and implementing SALT and in institutionalizing the new system both within the department and within the practice of Rhode Island public schools.

The important aspects of this accomplishment, when compared to that of other states (and nations), are:

- ◆ RIDE acceptance of the challenge to make school accountability effective, rather than to simply accept prevailing approaches to accountability
- ◆ The comprehensive nature of the design of SALT, which seeks to combine conventional accountability and support mechanisms into one system in order to strengthen the effectiveness of each
- ◆ The extensive development, success, and codification of the methodology used by SALT visit teams, which is designed to ensure accurate, fair, and useful conclusions about the actual state of learning and teaching in schools
- ◆ The substantial participation of school practitioners in the SALT design and implementation, which is essential because it establishes the accountability,

understanding, and ownership of SALT by these practitioners

The major indication that SALT has made a substantial start is the current intense, ongoing, and often passionate discussion about SALT. Differing views about the intent, design, validity, and success of SALT generate interest within the department and across the Rhode Island practitioner community, including this research team. While the reviews of SALT are not always “positive,” neither its critics nor its advocates mince words.

While attention to SALT outside of Rhode Island has been cursory and sometimes not well informed, comments about RIDE’s attempt to build new structures for school accountability have been generally supportive and positive.

*(Sources of Evidence: 1.1: List of Salt Documents: e.g., Blueprint; Handbook for Chairs, external responses; 1.2: The Providence Journal; 1.3: Visit Team Reflections; 2.1: Design Critique; 3.1: Findings on Perceptions; 3.2: Site Visits Findings on Perceptions; 4.1: SALT Visit Reports on School Leadership SALT Fellow Perceptions.)*

## **CONCLUSION 2. THE SALT CYCLE IS UNEVENLY IMPLEMENTED.**

The SALT design is built on five components: school self-study, school improvement planning, the SALT visit, school report night, and the compact for learning. While there has been considerable development work on each of these components, their implementation is uneven.

The systems that are most fully developed and thoroughly implemented are the “information systems” that RIDE controls.

- ◆ State-wide testing tied to established standards
- ◆ *Information Works!*
- ◆ SALT survey
- ◆ SALT school visit report
- ◆ SALT guides

The components that are not well implemented are those that require schools to use this information to improve learning and teaching. These include:

- ◆ Self-study

- ◆ School improvement planning and implementation, including the modification of the plan from the SALT visit report
- ◆ The development of the compact for learning
- ◆ School report night

Many schools have made progress in implementing some of the components of SALT. The effective implementation of these components requires strong school leadership committed to and accountable for improving teaching and learning within the SALT system.

Implementing these components of SALT has had a powerful impact on the state's educational system, changing school and district awareness of their practices. This has created considerable momentum for change and reform as well as resistance and resentments, which have compromised the willingness of schools and districts to whole-heartedly participate in the SALT process. This resistance is not inherently negative. It should help guide the continuous refinement of the SALT components.

Major gaps in implementation are:

- ◆ The current inability of schools to use SALT activities directly to affect school-based actions and practice to improve student learning
- ◆ The lack of clear plans for district involvement in SALT

Major causes of these gaps are:

- ◆ Confusion about SALT purposes and methods
- ◆ Lack of school ownership of self-study and planning
- ◆ The sense in some schools that SALT, specifically the visit, attacks them

***(Sources of Evidence: 2.1: Towards a Critique of SALT Design; 2.2: Towards a Critique of SALT Design: An Addendum; 3.1: Overall Findings Regarding Perceptions of SALT; 3.2: School Site Visit Findings)***

**CONCLUSION 3. THE MANY UNRESOLVED QUESTIONS WITHIN RIDE ABOUT THE PURPOSE AND VALUE OF SALT FURTHER IMPEDE IMPLEMENTATION.**

The presence of unresolved questions is not surprising, given the major changes that SALT requires, but unresolved questions confuse practitioners in the field, and weaken RIDE's ability to lead and support districts and schools to own and implement SALT.

The most important unresolved questions within RIDE are:

- ◆ Can SALT really balance in one coherent system the tension between holding schools accountable for results and supporting schools in their ongoing efforts to improve? Or is SALT accountability not really accountability?
- ◆ To what extent can SALT be used as a framework to create coherence across all of the important RIDE agendas, initiatives, projects, and programs?
- ◆ Is SALT really a departmental school accountability system or is it a project of a RIDE office? What are the implications of this issue for RIDE organizational structure?
- ◆ What is the relationship between SALT, on the one hand, and standards for student learning and standards-based instruction, on the other?
- ◆ How reliable and valid are the reported conclusions of the visit teams, since they are produced using an unconventional methodology of inquiry and different teams? Would the visit conclusions be improved if teams used standards and rubrics and were more highly trained and experienced in conducting the visit?

*(Sources of Evidence: 2.1: Towards a Critique of SALT Design; 2.2: Towards a Critique of SALT Design: An Addendum; 3.1: Overall Findings Regarding Perceptions of SALT; 3.2: School Site Visit Findings, 3.6: Perceptions of Members of the SALT Leadership Team)*

## Reflections on Conclusions

SALT is not perfect, either in its implementation or in the imperfections that come to light when the plan for a SALT component hits the reality of a school. When the SALT cycle is fully implemented, the integration between its components is likely to reduce questions about those components that are now in place. Existing components (e.g. testing, survey,

and the visit) have benefited from refinements based on their use.

Misconceptions of SALT's intent, purpose, assumptions, and definitions often create dissonance in school, district, and RIDE perceptions, but not as much as SALT leadership may think. While much of the conceptual structure of SALT is not particularly complex or abstract, as some see it, it is different from what is typically expected for either an accountability system or a school support system. The underlying methodology of the school visit is an important example of the SALT structure that is different.

Some dissonance can be attributed to the lack of consistent, clear, and coherent direction about SALT from RIDE leadership. While important progress has been made to spread the design and implementation of SALT beyond the Office of School Improvement and Accountability to other RIDE offices, important gaps across offices still exist. A particularly difficult dissonance in RIDE internal structure is the question of whether SALT is a departmental initiative or an office project (or program).

### **Recommendations to RIDE Leadership**

1. Charge the SALT leadership team to brief RIDE leadership about the current working assumptions that SALT makes in relation to the questions raised in Conclusion 3.
2. Decide which questions to address at the departmental level and what mechanisms to use for doing that.
3. Clarify the implications for RIDE as an agency and for RIDE staff of clearly defining SALT as a departmental initiative rather than as an office project.
4. Consider how the implementation of SALT would be best promoted within any planned restructuring of the department, particularly in the discussion of Field Service teams, paying attention to how to support schools in translating information and plans into effective school-based action that improves student learning.
5. Strengthen the working relationships between instruction, assessment, and public relations, on the one hand, and the SALT leadership team, on the other, to further departmental understanding of SALT and to increase the effectiveness of its implementation.

6. Charge the SALT leadership team to continue its work to develop effective tools to support schools as they change their daily teaching and learning practices so that better student learning results. (See recommendations on self-study and improvement planning in *Source of Evidence Document # 3.1.*)
7. Charge the SALT leadership team to consider carefully the detailed feedback provided in the source of evidence documents and to present RIDE leadership with priorities for future development and implementation. Include in these priorities an initiative to engage districts in the SALT process, paying particular attention to their role in forming effective compacts for learning and supporting school self-study.
8. Create an internal group to advise the research team in designing phase two of the SALT Study.
9. Work proactively with Rhode Island media to more accurately represent SALT. Create with the SALT leadership team a strategic approach to better articulate the purpose and procedures of SALT that is focused on the most germane audiences.

## The Design of Phase One

### OVERVIEW

The research problem for phase one of the SALT Study was to design a research plan that would generate conclusions with substantive value and allow for a pilot test of a variety of evidence collecting and analysis activities. It required an approach that would both ensure rigor and allow flexibility in design in order to capture change in SALT, take advantage of preliminary conclusions, and remain responsive to the real issues that SALT and RIDE leadership face.

It was clear from the outset that it would not be possible to conduct a “traditional program evaluation” of the measured impacts of SALT. It was too early and such a study would not provide the information RIDE needs in order to make the best decisions about SALT. The SALT Study design contains elements from a number of research models.

### DESIGN COMPONENTS

#### Framework for the Questions

The first step was to frame the research questions. In August 2000, Rick Richards created the framework of questions that follows. It was discussed and revised a number of times by the research team. It was useful to phase one work.

The first table displays the framework, showing the conceptual structure of SALT. It lists the SALT activities designed to put the ideas into practice. The next table links the framework to the initial research questions.

Table 1. The Framework of Rhode Island’s Accountability System

Accountability Element	Intent of Element	Activities
1. High expectations for the cognitive and affective development of all students	Spell out the purpose of the educational system to schools, districts, the public, and other stakeholders so that roles and responsibilities within the system can be clarified and re-aligned	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. RIDE’s document on the goals of education.</li> <li>2. RIDE frameworks</li> <li>3. RIDE’s adaptation of New Standards</li> <li>4. Locally developed or adopted standards</li> <li>5. Mission &amp; objectives in improvement plans</li> </ol>
2. Local school leadership dedicated to improving student learning	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Broad based at the school and in its community.</li> <li>2. Develop broad-based appreciation of, and expertise in, promoting the development of a learning organization</li> <li>3. Create consensus on directions and actions school will pursue,</li> <li>4. Distribute workload,</li> <li>5. Create buy-in</li> </ol>	School Improvement Team (SIT): SALT guide on forming a school improvement team
3. Ongoing gathering of evidence, building and testing of conclusions, commendation and recommendations about how well the local school provides its students with teaching & support that lead to good learning.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Create understanding of where and when learning is happening, and not</li> <li>2. Develop educators’ ability to respond to students who are not learning well enough,</li> </ol>	School Self-study: SALT guide on self-study & guides on particular self-study activities
4. School-based planning and discussion that leads to public descriptions of how the school intends to improve its capacity to improve learning for all students by changing teaching and the school environment.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Create understanding and consensus of how the structures and services of the school do, and do not, promote the development of professional expertise among its educators and good learning among its students.</li> <li>2. Use sound conclusions and recommendations based on evidence to detail for the school, its families, its community, its supporters, and other stakeholders, the ways in which the school will, or is, changing itself to enhance the ways its</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. School Improvement Planning: SALT guides on School Improvement planning, on building a School Improvement team &amp; ongoing training in planning: I...Plans, Mentoring, school professional development plan</li> <li>2. Action plans: SALT guide to Writing School Improvement Plans, Local guidance on developing action plans</li> </ol>

	students learn, how its teachers teach, and how the school supports these activities.	
5. Strong connections between schools, their families, their community, their supporters, and other stakeholders	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop understanding of, and support for, the teaching that is taking place in the school,</li> <li>2. Develop understanding of and support of, the mission, objectives and improvement activities of the school,</li> <li>3. Create opportunities for feedback on, and participation in, school improvement processes.</li> </ol>	School Report Night, Participation on School Improvement Team, Study Circles, SALT Parent Survey
6. Strong supportive relations between schools, their district, their school committee and RIDE.	Develop knowledge that will allow districts, school committees, and RIDE to effectively support the improvement efforts of schools and to intervene appropriately when schools demonstrate an inability to improve.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. RIDE Field Service Teams,</li> <li>2. District support to schools,</li> <li>3. SALT School Visits,</li> <li>4. District activities that create information that helps their schools improve,</li> <li>5. Compact for Learning,</li> <li>6. District Strategic Plans</li> </ol>

The following table connects this framework to the SALT Study.

Table 2. Framework for the SALT Study

<b>Research Questions. For each Accountability Activity, Gather Evidence and Address the Following:</b>				
Accountability Element	What have schools done to implement the accountability activity?	How closely does the implemented activity put the intended accountability activity into practice?	In what ways does the implemented activity advance or frustrate the intent of the accountability activity?	Who should do what next to support schools' progress?
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				

## **Initial Study Questions**

1. What have schools done to implement SALT?
2. How well does what the schools have done meet the intent of SALT?
3. How do districts regard what their schools have done?
4. What have the districts done to implement SALT and how effective has it been in relation to SALT objectives?
5. Who should do what to improve the design and implementation of SALT?

## **Sources of Evidence**

A source of evidence includes a set of study activities to generate evidence and one or more research documents that summarize the observations of an activity and/or present the researcher's findings about the evidence collected.

The sources of evidence for phase one are:

1. SALT documents
2. External reviewers critique of the salt design
3. Perceptions of SALT
4. Analysis of SALT reports

Full descriptions of each source of evidence and the research documents produced for each source of evidence are presented in Section III of this report: *Sources of Evidence*.

## **Building Conclusions**

The research team built conclusions from the evidence in a manner that was analogous to the process used by SALT visit teams.

A researcher's summary statement and/or statement of judgment is labeled a "finding" in the source of evidence documents.

A "conclusion" refers to the overall summary and judgment statements reported above. A conclusion requires discussion and decisions by the full research team working to reach consensus agreement.

The research team used these tests on all conclusions to select issues and to sharpen the rigor of each conclusion:

- ◆ The evidence of the study strongly supports the conclusion.

- ◆ The issue raised by that conclusion is important to the development of SALT and it is an important one for RIDE leadership at this time.
- ◆ The wording of the conclusion conveys the team's intent well.
- ◆ The statement contains the team's judgment.
- ◆ The statement is useful to RIDE leadership.

### **Design Issues for Phase Two<sup>1</sup>**

The pilot was successful in clarifying a number of questions and issues for the design of phase two.

1. The SALT Study should develop an explicit approach to determine what actually goes on in the practice of learning and teaching in schools that leads to better learning results.

The challenge here is to define the practice of learning and teaching so observers can see it more easily. That will greatly strengthen this study of what schools do as a consequence of their participation in SALT and how effective their response is in improving their actual practice of learning and teaching. That is the solid base for considering what deliberate guidance and structures SALT should provide schools.

The more direct the evidence is about the actual practice of learning and teaching, the more valuable the conclusions will be about the effectiveness of what SALT contributes to improving practice.

2. Research questions for phase two should include:

What is practitioner judgment? How does it contribute to improved teaching and learning practice? How do school practitioners think about their practice and its improvement? How do students think about how they learn and what they think they have learned?

How well do various theories of action actually work in Rhode Island schools as they grapple with SALT?

How do key participants vary in their perceptions of the value of the SALT process? How have those perceptions changed throughout the history of SALT? Is there an identifiable cycle of change in the perceptions of an individual participant or school?

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<sup>1</sup> This section was prepared by the Principal Consultant to SALT. These are issues that he thinks need to be considered in the design of phase two. They are not conclusions or recommendations.

What do the SALT visit reports say about a number of critical issues related to how well schools are doing now? Based on an analysis of the report texts, what can be learned to strengthen the visit inquiry methodology and to help schools, districts, RIDE, and citizens use the report effectively?

Are there any patterns emerging in test scores and survey data to indicate how well SALT is or is not working in schools?

3. While SALT supplements test scores with other legitimate measures of learning that does not imply that test scores should be ignored. The assessment office and URI should consider how to conduct analyses of current test results and other *Information Works!* data to provide one indication about the impact of SALT.
4. Since SALT generates strong perceptions about what it does and how well it does that, it is important that findings about how SALT is perceived should provide a full, statewide view, as well as an indication of how these perceptions change over time.
5. The design should never underestimate the complexity of schools, the process of change, state and national education policy, or the leadership function of a state department.
6. When researchers and other experts, who are not members of the research team, consider focused research questions, they make an important contribution to the evidence generated by the study.
7. Through many long, focused discussions of evidence and conclusions, the research team demonstrated that an adaptation of the approach to building conclusions, both works in this research context and adds considerable substance, rigor, and legitimacy to the process.
8. The sources of evidence provide a useful way to organize disparate data. They maintain the integrity of a particular discipline of data collection, make it possible to include the work of researchers who are not members of the research team, and, most important, increase the potential to build more substantial and useful conclusions for RIDE leadership.
9. The direct involvement of RIDE leadership at crucial junctures in the study process is sound. In phase two that involvement should extend from reviewing the draft report to

providing feedback on the research questions, and on the design of the study.

10. Catalpa's new capacity to analyze the text of the SALT reports, as piloted in phase one, has considerable potential for improving report quality and for making inferences across reports.
11. Questions about the validity and reliability of visit conclusions are both interesting and important and should be addressed in phase two.

These issues will be discussed more fully in a Catalpa Ltd. memo on the design of phase two, which is in preparation. This memo will also propose the frame for an in-depth study on the issues of validity and reliability that the SALT visit reports present. That memo will be reviewed as part of the preparation of the phase two design.



## SECTION III SOURCES OF EVIDENCE

### Introduction

The Conclusions of this study are based on four sources of evidence:

1. SALT Documents
2. External Critique of SALT Design
3. Perceptions of SALT
4. Analysis of SALT Visit Reports

A source of evidence is a research activity that is designed to generate evidence and conclusions about some aspect of SALT. The research activity is briefly described for each source of evidence.

Each source of evidence results in one or more Source of Evidence Documents that report on the research finding for that source of evidence. These reports vary in the amount of description and research judgment they include. The Source of Evidence Documents for this study are:

- 1.1 Categories for and List of Salt Documents*
- 1.2 Descriptive Generalizations about the Nature of The Providence Journal's Coverage of Salt*
- 1.3 Descriptive Generalizations about Salt Visit Team Members' Reflections on the Visit*
- 2.1 Towards a Critique of Salt Design*
- 2.2 Towards a Critique of Salt Design: An Addendum in the Light of Discussions on 21/22 May 2001 at RIDE*
- 3.1 Overall Findings Regarding Perceptions of Salt*
- 3.2 School Site Visit Findings*
- 3.3 School Principals' Perceptions*
- 3.4 District Administrators' Perceptions*
- 3.5 Perceptions of Members of Ride Field Service Teams*
- 3.6 Perceptions of Members of Little Salt Leadership Team*
- 3.7 Salt Fellows Perceptions*
- 4.1 What Salt Visit Reports Conclude about the Quality of School Leadership*

# SOURCE OF EVIDENCE # 1 SALT DOCUMENTS

## Overview

The SALT Study research team sees value in documents that have been produced about SALT, or have been produced by SALT staff, or by consultants since the beginning of SALT in 1996. We have created a collection of key documents as a source of evidence for this study and for further inquiry into the working of SALT. The research team worked during phase one to collect key documents and build a retrieval system that would facilitate access to these documents for various research purposes.

Three documents included as source of evidence documents in this report were based on analysis of different sets of SALT documents.

## STEPS

1. Developed initial description of categories to organize SALT documents and of retrieval systems.
2. Refined list of categories and list of documents available in each category (These lists are presented in *Categories of SALT Documents* immediately below.)
3. Selected and compiled documents for *Source of Evidence # 2: External Critique of SALT Design*. (Actual list used is included in the description of that source of evidence.)
4. Included past feedback and evaluation reports completed by Marilyn Crocker and/or Ann Abeille in evidence for *Source of Evidence # 3: Perceptions of SALT*.
5. Compiled, organized, and entered all SALT visit reports (123 reports) in computer file format that is compatible with *Atlas-Ti* in order to do textual analysis of reports. The early results of this analysis are presented in *Source of Evidence # 4: Analysis of SALT Reports*.
6. Compiled all articles published in *The Providence Journal* from 1998 that cite SALT and prepared Document 1.2 as a preliminary analysis of them.
7. Compiled reflections from members of SALT visit teams and prepared Document 1.3 as a preliminary analysis of them.

**SOURCE OF EVIDENCE DOCUMENTS**

- 1.1 *Categories for and list of SALT documents*
- 1.2 *Descriptive generalizations about the nature of The Providence Journal's coverage of SALT.*
- 1.3 *Descriptive generalizations about SALT visit team members' perceptions of the visit*

**LIMITATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR PHASE II**

Most of the work on this source of evidence during phase one was collecting available documents and establishing a system for the ongoing collection of documents. The potential of this for different analyses in phase two is high. Some examples of specifics that should be addressed in phase two are:

- ◆ Revise the collection form and procedures for gathering ongoing feedback from visit team members.
- ◆ Expand the SALT document archival system and make access to the documents easier.
- ◆ Conduct further analyses of SALT visit reports on both substantive and methodological issues.
- ◆ Conduct a thorough study on the quality and changes in public reporting of SALT.

## Source of Evidence Document # 1.1

### CATEGORIES FOR AND LIST OF SALT DOCUMENTS

#### Introduction

Rick Richards prepared this document with help from Mary Jo Foley and Tom Wilson.

#### Categories and Current List of SALT Documents (July 01)

#### **SALT Policy Documents**

State and RIDE policy documents that provide the foundation for SALT

##### **State Policy**

*All Kids, All Schools: The Rhode Island Comprehensive Education Strategy (June 1996)*

*Rhode Island Student Investment Initiative (Article 31)*

##### **RIDE Policy**

*District Strategic Plan and Article 31. Component of the Consolidated Resource Plan: 2000-01. Annual Update Guidance and Instructions*

*Progressive Support and Intervention: Next Steps for Improving Rhode Island's Low Performing Schools*

*Partnership Agreement between RIDE and CPSS/NEASC*

The Providence Compact and Quarterly Progress Reports

#### **SALT Framework Documents**

Documents that describe the conceptual foundation of the SALT system

*Guiding Principles of School Improvement*

*School Accountability for Improving Learning (SAIL)*

*SALT: A Blueprint for School Accountability for Learning and Teaching*, Rhode Island Department of Education, July 1996.

*SALT Principles*

#### **SALT in schools and districts**

Documents developed by or for schools and districts in the course of the SALT process.

#### **SALT Visit Reports**

#### **District Strategic Plans**

**Compacts for Learning****School Improvement Plans****School Report Night Presentations by Schools****School Reactions to SALT Visit Reports****SALT Guides and Resources**

The guides and resources developed and prepared by the department to help schools with the SALT process. During the last three years, 22 guides and resources have been distributed to schools. Most guides have been through two printings of 5,000 copies each and are awaiting a third printing. Many guides are now somewhat out of date and need revision.

**SALT Overview**

*School by School*

**Self-study**

*Conducting Self-Study*

*Standards Based Teaching and Learning*

*Following a Student*

*Examining Student Work*

*Using the SALT Survey*

*Using State Assessment Results*

*Considering Equity Gaps*

*Closing the Performance Gaps of English Language Learners*

*Creating a Safe, Healthy, and Nurturing School*

*Teacher Support Team*

*Teacher Evaluation, Best Practices*

**Improvement Planning**

*Building Conclusions (this guide connects self-study to improvement planning)*

*Building a School Improvement Team*

*Writing a School Improvement Plan*

**School Visit**

*Preparing to Host a School Visit*

*Using the School Visit Report*

**Following up on the Visit**

*After Serving on a SALT Visit: Sharing and Using What You Learned*

*Field Service Teams Forming Compacts for Learning*

*Superintendents Forming Compacts for Learning with Their Schools*

*School Improvement Teams Forming a Compact for Learning*

**Family and Community Engagement**

*Conducting School Report Night*

**SALT Operations, Activities, Protocols, and Procedures**

The most important documents related to the operation of SALT including training and conducting SALT visits. Many other documents related to the operation of SALT exist and more sub-categories will be added.

**SALT Training**

*Training Workshops for SALT Visit Teams: Agendas, Power Point Presentations and Feedback*

*Preparing Schools to Host a SALT Visit: Agendas, Power Point Presentations and Feedback*

*Other SALT Training Activities: Course Descriptions, Attendance and Feedback*

**SALT Visits**

*Handbook for Chairs of the SALT School Visit*

*SALT Visit Schedules*

**External Responses to and Perceptions about SALT****Rhode Island Media Coverage of SALT**

*Providence Journal*

199 articles have appeared in the *Journal* over the last three years.

*Other state media*

**National Comment on SALT**

Lynn Olson. "Moving Beyond Test Scores". *Education Week*, January 11, 1999.

Panasonic Foundation. "Rhode Island: Accountability = School Improvement." *Strategies*, May 2000

Scott Thompson. "The Authentic Standards Movement and its Evil Twin. *Kappan*, January 2001.

### **SALT Feedback and Evaluation**

Feedback data collected from SALT participants and evaluation and feedback reports prepared by consultants to RIDE.

#### **Feedback Data**

Reflections from members of SALT visiting teams

#### **Evaluation and Feedback Reports**

*Towards a Critique of the SALT Design*. James Learmonth and Jane Reed, May, 2001. (Included in this report as Source of Evidence Document 2.1.)

*Year 2 Evaluation: SALT Urban Elementary Network Pilot*. Ann Abeille and Nancy Hurley, Learning Innovations: a Division of WestEd, April 2000.

*Interim Report: Feedback on SALT Process from Five Schools*. Ann Abeille and Nancy Hurley, Learning Innovations: a Division of WestEd, June 2000.

*Focus Group Report: SALT Visiting Team Members, School Principals, District Administrators, and RIDE Field Service Team Members*. Ann Abeille, Learning Innovations: a Division of WestEd, September 1999.

*School Compact Focus Group Summary*. Marilyn Crocker, Marilyn Crocker Associates, March 2000.

*Summative Evaluation of the SALT Middle School Pilot*. Marilyn Crocker, Marilyn Crocker Associates, October 1999.

*A Formative Evaluation of the SALT Middle School Pilot*. Marilyn Crocker, Marilyn Crocker Associates, June 2000.

*The SALT Visiting Teams' Reports (April 1997-December 1998)*. Thomas A. Wilson, Catalpa, Ltd., January 1999.

*Interim Evaluation Report: SALT Pilot Project: Urban Elementary Network*. Ann Abeille and Nancy Hurley, Learning Innovations at WestEd. August 1998.

*Analysis of Comments on the SALT Survey*. Nancy Hurley, Learning Innovations at WestEd. July 1998.

*Transcript of Focus Group of School Participant Reactions to Early SALT Visit Reports*, Marilyn Crocker, Marilyn Crocker Associates, June 1998.

## Source of Evidence Document # 1.2

### DESCRIPTIVE GENERALIZATIONS ABOUT THE NATURE OF *THE PROVIDENCE JOURNAL'S* COVERAGE OF SALT.

#### Introduction

Articles about SALT published in *The Providence Journal* are part of the SALT document archive developed by the Office of School Improvement and Accountability for the SALT Study and other use. This data from the Rhode Island newspaper of record is useful for historical research on SALT as well as for tracing public perception of SALT.

One hundred and ninety-nine articles mentioning SALT appeared in *The Providence Journal* between September 1, 1998 and June 30, 2001. This number is based on an on-line search of the *Journal* archives using the key words **SALT**, **school**, and **education**. (An abbreviated list is attached.)

Mary Jo Foley did an initial analysis leading to the following generalizations.

#### Generalizations

One or more aspects of the SALT cycle was the main topic of 100 articles -- either the survey or the visit was alluded to, if not directly mentioned, in the headline. In 99 articles, SALT was discussed in a paragraph or less, or was part of a larger article on regional news.

The number of articles in which an aspect of the SALT cycle (almost invariably the survey or the visit) is the main topic has increased dramatically each year from 10 in Fall, 1998 to 47 in Spring, 2001. The word SALT appeared in a *Journal* headline 29 times in spring 2001 up from six times in 1999. This suggests a growing familiarity with the term among the Rhode Island public.

The total number of articles on SALT appearing in the *Journal* also increased between fall 1998 and spring 2001. From September 1, 1998 to December 31, 1998, 17 articles mentioned SALT. In 1999, 51 articles mentioned SALT and, in 2000, 60 articles mentioned SALT. Between January 1, 2001 and June 30, 2001, 71 articles mentioned SALT, more than in all of 2000.

As the number of school visits has increased, reporting on SALT has moved from a focus on the SALT survey to a focus on the school visit and report. In 1998, 15 articles mentioned the SALT survey while only one mentioned the school visit. In 1999, 22 articles mentioned the survey and 26 mentioned the visit. In 2000, 14 articles mentioned the survey and 39 mentioned the visit. By

spring, 2001, 62 articles talked about the visit while only six mentioned the survey.

Mention of SALT as a process remained steady with one mention in 1998, three in 1999, three in 2000, and one in 2001.

Headline	Byline	Date	Page	District and School
Parents happy with program, teachers at Elmhurst	Soljane Martinez	12-09-1998	C-01	Portsmouth
Edwatch Preparing a school for a SALT visit	Julia Steiny	03-22-1998	H-01	
Edwatch Preparing a school for a SALT visit	Julia Steiny	03-22-1998	H-01	Tiverton
Edwatch SALT Visit: A fabulous opportunity	Julia Steiny	03-29-1998	H-01	
Edwatch SALT visit : A fabulous opportunity	Julia Steiny	03-29-1998	H-01	
Principals respond to test with "improvement team" *	Jerry O'Brien	05-04-1998	C-01	Middletown
Edwatch Grudgingly, school says SALT helped	Julia Steiny	07-19-1998	H-01	Middletown – Gaudet
Edwatch Grudgingly, school says SALT helped	Julia Steiny	07-19-1998	H-01	Middletown
New Directors have high hopes for adult education *	Barbara C. Potter	09-03-1998	C-03	Ponaganset
School survey results spur vow of change	Ellen Liberman	09-08-1998	C-01	Warwick
School survey results fail to impress committee	Ellen Liberman	09-09-1998	C-03	Warwick
School board names a new superintendent	Ron Cassinelli	09-17-1998	C-01	Narragansett
Cranston Digest		10-13-1998	C-06	Cranston
Thompson cuts ties to ... accreditation service... state now review	Vaughn Watson	10-16-1998	C-01	Newport
Council wants dialogue on school funds	Tiffany Bartish	10-22-1998	C-01	Richmond
Middletown School Committee Candidate		10-28-1998	C-02	Middletown
East Bay Briefing Regional		10-30-1998	C-03	Barrington
School Committee will share results of SALT surveys Monday *	Celeste Katz	11-12-1998	D-02	Smithfield
school board members... tackles ... SALT testing	Ron Cassinelli	11-19-1998	C-04	Narragansett
Corrections		11-20-1998	C-02	Narragansett
Chariho school board votes to administer SALT survey... 6-5 vote	Tiffany Bartish	11-25-1998	C-01	Richmond – Chariho
News in Brief Cumberland 2 school meetings set for Wednesday		12-01-1998	C-02	Cumberland
... Some South Kingstown and Narragansett educators criticize the SALT survey again ..., calling it repetitious, intrusive and biased	D. Morgan McVicar	12-01-1998	A-01	
Is Salt worth using		12-11-1998	B-06	
Lincoln Digest		01-05-1999	C-06	Lincoln- Central School
Report praises SALT * ... Education Week magazine says the state's survey of students, teachers and parents deserves attention	Elizabeth Rau	01-13-1999	B-01	
State of Union Accountable schools: R.I. is already doing it	Elizabeth Rau	01-20-1999	A-04	
South County Digest		03-12-1999	C-04	North Kingstown
Regional News Briefs		03-25-1999	B-02	South Kingstown
Group striving to boost grades of students	Paul Davis	03-25-1999	D-01	South Kingstown
School to review security after Colo. Tragedy	Jerry O'Brien	04-27-1999	C-01	Rhode Island
How does your school perform? New statewide data now available	Morgan McVicar	05-04-1999	A-01	Rhode Island
New data spur school reform in R.I.	Morgan McVicar	05-09-1999	A-01	Exeter- West Greenwich
Information Works! – Measuring school performance	Barbara Polichetti	05-28-1999	C-01	Cranston
I... –...High school test gains are modest and hard to measure	Gina Macris	06-04-1999	C-01	Providence
Information Works! – Measuring school performance	Barbara Polichetti	06-04-1999	C-01	Cranston
Information Works! – Measuring school performance -	Celeste Tarricone	06-08-1999	C-01	West Greenwich
Information Works – Measuring school performance—scores	Karen A. Davis	06-09-1999	C-01	Providence
Information Works! – Measuring school performance – Students handle language arts, dips in math in lower grades	Celeste Tarricone and Bob Jagoli	06-14-1999	C-03	West Greenwich
Edwatch – Rhode Island misses boat on school choice	Julia Steiny	06-20-1999	G-01	
High school must bring innovation to studies, report says	Zachary Block	06-24-1999	C-01	Barrington
Western Hills M.S. gets new principal	Barbara Polichetti	07-28-1999	C-01	Cranston –
School construction on target for opening day	Zachary Block	08-27-1999	C-01	Barrington
Edwatch – Making sure teen pregnancy plans work	Julia Steiny	09-05-1999	H-01	
Letters to the Editor – Teachers volunteer a lot		09-09-1999	C-03	Bristol/Warren
Central High gets poor peer review	Gina Macris	09-13-1999	C-01	Providence
City Journal		09-19-1999	B-10	Providence
SALT team sprinkles school with praise	Tiffany Bartish	09-21-1999	C-01	Hopkinton
Edwatch – Lam leads a cultural revolution	Julia Steiny	10-10-1999	C-01	Providence
Team to grade school's abilities	Paul Davis	10-14-1999	C-05	South Kingstown
High School, once celebrated, now troubled	Paul Davis	11-17-1999	A-01	South Kingstown
Analysis – SALT's message: Even the best need improvement	D. Morgan McVicar	11-18-1999	A-17	
Board lambastes state report about school 'insulting'	LaPlante	11-18-1999	D-01	Woonsocket
S. Kingstown officials say changes have begun	Paul Davis	11-18-1999	A-13	South Kingstown
Regional News Briefs		11-19-1999	B-02	Narragansett
School Board will swallow SALT survey	Ron Cassunelli	11-19-99	C-01	Narragansett
The Lam Plan – Accountability based data		11-24-1999	C-01	Providence
Ferri school misses the mark on state report	Melanie Lefkowitz	11-26-1999	C-01	Johnston –

School Officials respond to report	Paul Davis	11-26-1999	C-03	South Kingstown School
What the survey says		11-26-1999	C-02	Johnston
Letters to the Editor		11-26-1999	C-09	Hope Valley – Chariho School District
School board asks commissioner, team to explain SALT report	Joseph R. Laplante	11-29-1999	C-02	Woonsocket
The Lam Plan – Regroup to focus on classes, students		11-30-1999	C-01	Providence
The Lam Plan – Vision includes union, parents		12-01-1999	D-01	Providence
State report on South Kingstown High School		12-02-1999	D-04	South Kingstown
Education team gives school high marks	Thomas J. Morgan	12-02-1999	D-01	Smithfield
State defends report critical of Citizens school	Joseph R. Laplante	12-02-1999	D-01	Woonsocket
SALT team delivers stinging assessment of Gorton	Mary Lhowe	12-02-1999	D-01	Warwick
Education team gives school high marks	Thomas J. Morgan	12-02-1999	D-01	Smithfield
Edwatch – Learning lessons from overseas	Juile Steiny	12-05-1999	H-01	
State group seeks to alter fundraiser law	Thomas J. Morgan	12-07-1999	C-01	Smithfield
Cranston Digest		12-08-1999	C-08	Cranston
Principal: Report Critical of school old news	Paul Davis	12-15-1999	D-01	South Kingstown
School garners good rating but has room for improvement	Paul Dazis	12-22-1999	C-03	South Kingstown
Letter’s South Kingstown High School works well		12-23-1999	B-07	South Kingstown
Face of school district changing, superintendent says	Robert L. Smith	12-28-1999	C-01	Newport
SALT reports critical of three city schools	Matt McKinney	01-13-2000	C-02	Pawtucket
SALT report uncharacteristically praises high school	Joseph R. LaPlante	01-13-2000	C-01	Woonsocket
Quick agreement on teachers’ pact started as joke	Matt McKinney	01-17-2000	C-01	Pawtucket
Slater staff says SALT report included praise for the school	Matt McKinney	01-18-2000	C-01	PawtucketHigh
Evaluation team cites its nurturing environment		02-08-2000	C-01	Cranston
Barrows Elementary has bragging rights Evaluation team cites its nurturing environment	Barbara Polichetti	02-08-2000	C-01	Cranston
SALT report shows work to be done at Ricci School	Richard Salit	02-09-2000	C-01	North Providence
Jenks report lacked solutions, principal tells school board	Matt McKinney	02-16-2000	C-01	Pawtucket
Edwatch – Needs are linked to achievement	Julia Steiny	02-20-2000	H-01	Newport
Edwatch- Managing conflict between school, home	Julia Steiny	02-27-2000	H-01	
Western Hills gets prepped for SALT Evaluation	Barbara Polichetti	02-28-2000	C-01	Cranston
Edwatch- If guidance takes charge, students can benefit	Julia Steiny	03-05-2000	H-01	
Opposition to charter school grows	Melanie Lefkowitz	03-13-2000	C-01	Johnston
SALT review: Western Hills is good, potentially excellent	Barbara Polichetti	03-14-2000	C-01	Cranston
Trying to float a charter school	Melanie Lefkowitz	03-15-2000	C-08	Johnston
A conversation With –Deputy Supt. Melody A. Johnson	Gina Macris	03-21-2000	C-01	Providence
SALT team critical of schools’ staff	Joanne Marciano	03-29-2000	C-01	Cumberland
Advisory group to ponder dropout rate, criticisms	Paul Davis	04-05-2000	C-03	South Kingstown School
Elements of the State’s School- Reform plan	Celeste Tarricone	04-09-2000	A-21	
Hines resigns as principal of high school	Elizabeth Abbott	04-10-2000	C-01	South Kingstown
Edwatch- Accountable public service	Julia Steiny	04-16-2000	H-01	
Patricia Hines gets post in Scituate school system	Journal Staff Reports	05-04-2000	C-05	Scituate
Edwatch- One School achieves perfection	Julia Steiny	05-07-2000	H-01	
Review team awards Eden Park School high praises	Barbara Polichetti	05-09-2000	C-01	Cranston
Hoxise School given good grades by rating team	Michael Smith	05-11-2000	D-01	Warwick
Warwick’s Hoxsie School given good grades by SALT evaluators	Michael Smith	05-12-2000	C-04	Warwick
Parents- A school’s best friend	Julia Steiny	05-20-2000	H-01	
He’s just super	Richard Salit	05-22-2000	C-01	North Providence
SALT Survey report is peppered with praise	M. Bradford Grabowski	05-26-2000	C-01	Lincoln
Play area at school described as unsafe in review	Journal Staff Writer	06-05-2000	C-01	Lincoln
Schools survey’s flaws dissected	Melanie Lefkowitz	06-14-2000	C-01	Burrillville
SALT visiting team doesn’t mince words: “What a School”	Journal Staff Writer	06-15-2000	D-01	East Greenwich
School post a ‘perfect fit’ says Jermain	Alisha A. Pina	08-17-2000	C-01	Little Compton
Coventry to be hub for teacher training	Nicole Gesualdo	08-24-2000	C-01	Coventry
Letter to the Editor – Appalled by Steiny’s socialistic ravings		08-24-2000	B-07	
Commentary- Stay true to school reform	Robert Deblois	09-21-2000	B-07	
Edwatch- Connecting students and schools	Julia Steiny	09-24-2000	H-01	
Learning, Act II	Ellen Liberman	09-26-00	C-01	West Warwick
Commentary – We’ve made progress on school reform	Peter McWalters	10-05-2000	B-06	
Providence School Activities – School to host ‘choice fairs’		10-11-2000	C-08	Providence,
Roger Williams Middle School teams with Lifespan, zoo		10-16-2000	C-03	Providence
Assistant principal gets top middle school post	Grabowski	10-17-2000	C-01	Lincoln
Middle school principal named in Lincoln	Grabowski	10-18-2000	C-04	Lincoln
...Feinstein’s reading challenge may be close shave for principal		10-23-2000	C-03	Providence

Campaign 2000 ... Portsmouth School Committee		10-24-2000	C-03	Portsmouth
Campaign 2000 – Political hopefuls field queries at forum	Joseph R. LaPlante	10-25-2000	C-01	North Kingstown
Edwatch – Standards: Walking the walk	Julia Steiny	10-29-2000	H-01	
Cumberland Digest		11-09-2000	D-07	Cumberland
...Providence to join West Point award program		11-09-2000	D-07	Providence
...Providence school cruising onto information superhighway		11-14-2000	C-06	Providence
Officials digest SALT study of Babcock School	Andrew Goldsmith	11-16-2000	C-01	Westerly
High school praised in SALT report	Alisha A. Pina	11-17-2000	C-01	Portsmouth
SALT praises Dunn's Corners	Alex Kuffner	11-17-2000	C-01	Westerly – Dunn's Corners
Regional News Briefs		11-17-2000	B-02	Portsmouth High School
School gets praise, ideas from SALT rating team	Nicole Gesualdo	11-21-2000	C-01	Coventry –
Regional News Briefs		11-21-2000	B-02	Coventry – Hopkins Hill
... Hope High's media program gets top regional award		11-21-2000	C-03	Providence
Providence School Activities		11-28-2000	C-06	Providence
Greenbush School is awarded accreditation	Ellen Liberman	12-05-2000	C-01	West Warwick
Edgewood Highland evaluators impressed	Barbara Polichetti	12-12-2000	C-01	Cranston
SALT advises changes at Lincoln Central school	Grabowski	01-06-2001	B-01	Lincoln
Lincoln Central SALT report criticized	Grabowski	01-09-2001	C-01	Lincoln
SALT report praises North Cumberland	Joanne Marciano	01-10-2001	C-01	Cumberland
Providence School Activities		01-11-2001	C-04	Providence
R.I. given failing grade over school standards	Linda Borg	01-11-2001	A-01	
Schools get double-barreled scrutiny by state team	S. I. Rosenbaum	01-12-2001	C-01	West Warwick School
SALT team to visit Tower Street School	Andrew Goldsmith	01-12-2001	C-03	Westerly
...Rhode Island schools are on track despite failing grade ...	Ron Wolk	01-15-2001	B-07	
Junior Senior high scrutinized	Nicole Gesualdo	01-17-2001	C-01	West Greenwich
SALT team praises 2 schools but urge pushing students	Nicole Gesualdo	01-18-2001	C-02	West Greenwich
Norton School wins praise of SALT Team	Joanne Marciano	01-23-2001	C-01	Cumberland
School end year with a surplus of 44,355	Joanne Marciano	01-26-2001	C-01	Cumberland
Commentary- Woonsocket High Model of reform	D'acchioli	02-04-2001	D-08	Woonsocket
Letters to Editor Rogers High School and Thompson Middle School		02-07-2001	C-03	Newport –
Greene School gets scathing evaluation	Ellen Liberman	02-15-2001	C-01	Warwick
South County Letters South Kingstown High School		02-16-2001	C-04	South Kingstown –
Regional News Brief (Winman Junior High School)		02-16-2001	B-02	Warwick
Evaluation of Winman was affirming says principal	Ellen Liberman	02-16-2001	C-01	Warwick
Edwatch- RI receives an 'F' for school reform	Julia Steiny	02-18-2001	H-01	
Horgan School gets high ranking	S.I. Rosenbaum	02-19-2001	B-01	West Warwick
Cranston East gets high praise from visiting SALT team	Barbara Polichetti	02-23-2001	C-01	Cranston
Regional News Briefs Cranston High School East		02-23-2001	B-02	Cranston
Lippitt School faculty warmly commended by SALT evaluators	Ellen Liberman	03-01-2001	C-01	Warwick – Lippitt School
South County Letters- Sensible port formula: Local benefits, few environmental jolts		03-02-2001	C-06	North Kingstown
Tower Street School gets guidance	Andrew Goldsmith	03-06-2001	C-03	Westerly
High School earns praise from state evaluators	Bryan Rourke	03-07-2001	C-01	Middletown
Sullivan School In Newport receives so-so score from state	Bryan Rourke	03-08-2001	C-01	Newport
Stony Lane hits homer in SALT assessment	Joseph R. LaPlante	03-09-2001	C-01	North Kingstown School
Inspectors give Winsor School high marks	Thomas J. Morgan	03-16-2001	C-01	Smithfield
Edwatch- For some choice is already here	Julia Steiny	03-18-2001	H-01	
Tech-school could face probation from accrediting organization	Alex Kuffner	03-28-2001	C-05	Richmond
Providence offers a fair choice	Julia Steiny	04-08-2001	H-01	
Initial findings of SALT report on 2 schools aired	Alex Kuffner	04-11-2001	C-01	Richmond
School reacts positively to SALT brickbats	Alex Kuffner	04-12-2001	C-01	Richmond
School addressing concerns raised in SALT Report	Alex Kuffner	04-13-2001	C-01	Richmond
Stadium School draws raves from SALT report	Barbara Polichetti	04-17-2001	C-01	Cranston
New Schedule may mean longer classes at high school	Alisha A. Pina	04-18-2001	C-01	Portsmouth I
Portsmouth School Department preparing its Internet premiere	Alisha A. Pina	04-20-2001	C-05	
Elementary school gets stellar grade from state (Paine School)	Douglas Steinke	04-25-2001	C-03	Foster
Middle school receives mixed state assessment	Liz Anderson	04-25-2001	C-03	Burrillville
Chariho administrators brainstorm solutions to SALT report demerits	Alex Kuffner	04-26-2001	C-04	Richmond
SALT report tough on middle school management (Middle School)	Liz Anderson	04-27-2001	C-01	Burrillville
A urban school success story (Vartan Gregorian Elementary School)	Julia Steiny	04-29-2001	H-01	Providence
Tepid SALT report no surprise at high School	Kristen Rasmussen	05-01-2001	C-01	Bristol
Colt-Andrews School Aces state SALT report	Kristen Rasmussen	05-02-2001	C-01	Bristol
Vorro's Response		05-08-01	C-02	North Providence
Evaluators praise Arlington School's literacy emphasis	Barbara Polichetti	05-08-01	C-01	Cranston

Vorro upset by SALT report on Olney School	Richard Salit	05-08-2001	C-01	North Providence
Toughest test: Luring students to take exam	Linda Borg	05-14-2001	A-01	
Education-SALT report calls Callahan School a 'wonderful place'	Liz Anderson	05-16-2001	C-01	Burrillville
VonVillas reacts to critical report	Liz Anderson	05-16-2001	C-06	Burrillville
Education- Vorro: State review of two schools 'positive, favorable	Richard Salit	05-16-2001	C-01	North Providence
School lauded by SALT team- Frenchtown Elementary on its way to excellence, raters say	S.I. Rosenbaum	05-21-2001	B-01	East Greenwich
Winsor Hill Elementary gets stellar SALT review	Bob Jagolinzer	05-22-2001		Johnston
Little Compton Journal- School earns good marks in state review	Alisha A. Pina	05-24-2001	C-05	Little Compton
SALT Report (Stephen Olney School)		05-28-2001	C-02	North Providence
Chariho: Seeing what works	Linda Borg	05-30-2001		Richmond –High School
SALT: Greystone middle school pupils 'inequitably served'	Richard Salit	05-30-2001		North Providence – Greystone School
Little Compton Journal- Surf's up for the town web site	Alisha A. Pina	05-31-2001	C-02	Little Compton
South County Letters		06-08-2001	C-06	Richmond – Chariho High School
High School upgrading, accreditation run afoul	Gina Macris	06-08-2001	C-01	Providence -
School board to discuss SALT report	Grabowski	06-11-2001	B-01	Lincoln – Lincoln Middle 1
SALT study calls for elimination of tracking	Grabowski	06-12-2001	C-01	Lincoln – Lincoln Middle
SALT team praises Oak Lawn School's strong leadership, dedicated faculty'	Barbara Polichetti	06-12-2001	C-06	Cranston – Oak Lawn Elementary School
Tiverton Middle School – SALT assessments released	Scott Mayerowitz	06-14-2001	C-01	Tiverton
Walter E. Ranger Elementary School – Programs praised, crowding criticized	Scott Mayerowitz	06-14-2001	C-01	Tiverton – Walter E. Ranger
Suspended- 1 in 10 ... students were suspended last year	Marion Davis	06-17-2001	A-01	
Numbers show how suspension is used		06-17-2001	A-13	
Newport Journal- School Chief given 3-year pact	Bryan Rourke	06-25-2001	B-05	Newport
SALT reports have praise for schools	Alisha A. Pina	06-27-2001	C-01	Portsmouth
Coggeshall, Sheffield get their SALT report	Bryan Rourke	06-29-2001		Newport
Study Suggest improvements at Forest Ave. School	Jerry O'Brien	07-02-2001		Middletown

## Source of Evidence Document # 1.3

### DESCRIPTIVE GENERALIZATIONS ABOUT SALT VISIT TEAM MEMBERS' REFLECTIONS ON THE VISIT

#### Introduction

The SALT visit coordinator has collected reflections from members of SALT visit teams for three years. These reflections are voluntary and relatively open-ended. All visit team members are given reflection sheets that have the instructions "As part of our ongoing refinement of the SALT visit we look forward to your feedback and reflection on this visit. After you have completed it, you can mail you reflection directly to..." In addition to mailing in reflections, many visit team members submit their reflections electronically.

Although reflections exist for the four years in which SALT visits have been conducted, this analysis covers only the most recent year, SY 2000-01. The reasons for making this selection are: 1.) The visits conducted this year represent the work of a different group of Fellows than previous years (there were four new Fellows leading visits in SY 2001), and 2.) Changes were made to clarify the focus on student learning that were operationalized in SY 2000-01. Altogether, there were 46 reflections received from visits conducted in SY 2001 from a possible pool of approximately 600.

Rick Richards did the initial analysis of these reflections.

#### Generalizations

The reflections are all positive in tone, and this is extraordinary. This does not mean that problems and grievances are not aired in the reflections. It means that no reflection contains predominantly negative comments or is negative as a totality. Instead, all reflections contain predominantly positive comments and are positive as a totality. It seems unlikely that this is the product of wanting to please the SALT team or SALT Fellows, given that the option to remain anonymous can be exercised. The power of this finding is that the SALT visit, when it excites a response that people want to communicate, excites predominantly positive, constructive responses.

At a slightly more specific level, positive responses express:

The visit is a powerful, valuable learning experience (mentioned in 27 reflections): this was expressed variously as a "professional development" experience, as an opportunity to see what others are doing, or as an opportunity to reflect on their own practice

Favorable opinions about the SALT Fellow (mentioned in 30 reflections): reflections tend to recognize that conducting a visit, and especially

writing a visit report, requires a high level of skill, "professionalism", "neutrality" and an ability to keep the team "on task" without being directive in a substantial way

Appreciation for the visit process (mentioned in 24 reflections): comments in this category exclude related but more focused comments on the visit protocol. These comments express a more general appreciation of the visit experience but do not focus on learning or professional development. Instead, they mention that the visit is enjoyable (contrary to expectations), good for schools, and well organized

Favorable experiences with the visit team (mentioned in 18 reflections): comments in this category talk about the value in working with a collection of people from across the system, about the personal benefits of conducting inquiry with a group, about the difficulty and value of coming to consensus in a group and writing in a group

Admiration for the SALT accountability process (mentioned in 15 reflections): team members said it was good that people are going into schools and seeing what is actually happening, that the visit has a positive effect on schools because they spruce up, that the visit puts pressure on districts and school leaders to conduct their own accountability exercises, that the system encourages schools rather than finding fault, and in several other ways showed good understanding of the ways in which SALT exercises accountability.

Approval of the way in which SALT visit teams conduct inquiry and write the report--the SALT methodology (mentioned in 10 reflections): these comments talked about how well the SALT focus areas work, how rewarding the inquiry and discussion process is, how surprised they are at how rigorous the visit is, how appreciative they are of how much they learn, and some amazement that the report gets written at all or as well as it is

Enthusiasm for following a student and the learning this exercise generates (mentioned in nine reflections).

One problematic issue, time and scheduling appears in 15 reflections. Time is an issue for visit team members who are teachers (they get tired out, neglect their families, or their classrooms) and for visit team members who are principals (substitutes are hard to get to cover for teachers on a visit).

A variety of other problems and issues are identified, including the need for visit chairs to remain neutral, for visit teams members not to have conflicts of interest, for training to emphasize the "positive intent" of the visit, and for more objective methods of measuring schools (mentioned in one reflection that advocated the use of rubrics and standards for schools), and the need for the visit to include a meeting with teachers.

## SOURCE OF EVIDENCE # 2 EXTERNAL CRITIQUE OF SALT DESIGN

### Overview

This source of evidence met both substantive and piloting objectives of phase one. It starts an ongoing process to review the design of SALT as an accountability system and includes in phase one, work completed by external researchers who are not members of the research team

James Learmonth, Director of the Centre for Leadership and School Improvement (CELSI), and Jane Reed, a professor at the Institute of Education at the University of London, were engaged to review more than 20 SALT documents in order to critique the SALT design and its implementation.

### STEPS

1. Tom Wilson prepared the charge for their work and prepared the collection of documents.
2. James and Jane spent close to a day reviewing the documents using the protocol of questions furnished in their charge.
3. They met twice to agree on the major findings to make in the written feedback to RIDE. This document is included here as *Source of Evidence Document 2.1*.
4. In May 2001 James and Jane presented their draft findings to a two-hour discussion meeting with the commissioners, the research team and some members of SALT leadership at RIDE. In addition they met with the SALT Fellows and participated in an open forum on SALT and Practice Based Accountability sponsored by the Brown Department of Education and Catalpa Ltd.
5. Weighing the discussions and the feedback reaction, James and Jane prepared an Addendum to their first document. This is *Source of Evidence Document 2.2*.

### DOCUMENTS

- 2.1 *Towards a Critique of the SALT Design*
- 2.2. *An Addendum in the Light of Discussions on May 21/22 May 2001 at RIDE.*

**LIMITATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR PHASE II**

This source of evidence generated important perspectives on the design of SALT, and generated excellent discussion within RIDE.

The Phase II Design should include sources of evidence produced by researchers who are not on the research team. This is particularly important for analyses that require methodological expertise that is not present on the team, or work that considers issues, such as the SALT design, where an outside perspective is particularly useful.

The plan for continuing the discussion on the design should expand to include experts from two or three different research contexts. James and Jane should be asked to review changes they see in SALT's design and implementation.

## Source of Evidence Document # 2.1

### TOWARDS A CRITIQUE OF SALT DESIGN

#### Introduction

We are very pleased to have been invited to read a wide range of SALT documentation and prepare this short summary of our reflections for discussion. We are aware that SALT is a developing process, not yet in its final form, and we have tried to bear that in mind in our analysis and comments.

Given the limited time frame, we have focused on some of the documents in greater depth than others. We have also focused on some aspects of the design of SALT more than on others. For us 'design' in SALT has three main components:

- ◆ Purpose
- ◆ Philosophy and
- ◆ Methodology.

We have concentrated mainly on the first two and the extent of the coherence we have found between them in the documentation that we read.

We are interested in exploring the impact that the purposes and philosophy of SALT in action are having on its methodology and outcomes.

We want to begin by congratulating everyone who has been involved in the creation and implementation of the SALT process. We have found it exciting and encouraging that what you are engaged in has the following crucial features:

- ◆ It gives both responsibility and status to schools and teachers to study and make judgments about the quality of learning and teaching in their own community
- ◆ It combines internal and external elements in the compilation of evidence about the quality of learning and teaching
- ◆ It gives priority in the context of classroom observation to evidence of student learning rather than teacher performance
- ◆ It provides a statement of intent about the partnership between school, district and state in raising student achievement even if the roles in that process are not yet entirely clear.

- ◆ It provides for both professionals and non – professionals a discourse about quality in teaching and learning which goes well beyond the basic currency of test scores
- ◆ It begins to distinguish, for a wide audience, between student, teacher and school performance
- ◆ It finds an innovative balance between accountability and school improvement

### Feedback messages

We have organised our feedback into the following 5 sections:

- ◆ 10 Key messages about SALT
- ◆ Documentary examples that are **CONGRUENT** with these messages
- ◆ Documentary examples that conveyed **TENSIONS** to us in SALT
- ◆ Documentary examples that convey **DISSONANCE** to us in SALT
- ◆ Issues arising for further discussion

### 10 Key Messages about SALT

All students can learn.

The student voice and ownership of learning is crucial to learning (*Standards Based Teaching and Learning, p. 6*).

Standards are about student learning (*Standards Based Teaching and Learning, p. 1*).

We need to make sure our schools become places where all students learn and thrive.

Focus area 3: Relationships matter in learning.

SALT is a system of accountability that works to empower schools to become the agents of their own improvement.

Self-study describes the essential work of school improvement.

“The vision of SALT is to invest each school with the power to assess achievement and address issues” (*SALT Works, p. 4*).

“SALT is our best way of proving our trust that schools can do it.” (*SALT Works, p. 5*).

“We will all be partners in this” (*SALT Works, p. 4*). The state and district have the responsibility and capacity to contribute to that process.

### Documentary examples that are CONGRUENT with these messages

We found evidence of a great degree of coherence between the key messages outlined above and the rest of the documentation. For example, improving the ability of students to take responsibility for their own learning ‘is the single most important purpose of everyone in the network’ (*SALT Blueprint, p. 28*) reinforces the main messages about learning being at the heart of the enterprise. ‘In a standards based classroom students are able to tell in their own words what they are doing and why’ (*Standards Based Teaching and Learning*), ‘a standards based classroom is student centered’ (*Standards Based Teaching and Learning, p. 4*).

The message of entitlement is again strengthened by the statement ‘All Students are entitled to have the opportunity to reach high standards’ (*SALT WORKS, p. 2*) but that standards do not mean standardisation (*Standards Based Teaching and Learning, p. 2*).

Similarly the message that the process is trying to connect schools to what students learn, recognises the complexity and challenge of doing that in school improvement. That focusing on learning is not a simple act. Whether successful learning is taking place is also an essential feature of the process (*SALT Blueprint, p. 28*).

We appreciate the concept of self-study, and that its defining features are asking questions, getting answers and making decisions. The guide to conducting self-study says this should be the foundation of school improvement and that it should be continuous and ongoing (*p. 3*). *SALT Blueprint* says that school Administrators should create the climate for school based inquiry and *Salt Works* says it is not about the performance of individual teachers.

The two sets of messages that we have documented so far have given us a very clear picture of both the purpose and the philosophy of SALT. We however found some things that lead in our view to tensions in the SALT philosophy.

### Documentary examples that convey TENSIONS in SALT

We detect an underlying tension between the purpose of ‘accountability’ and the purpose of ‘learning’ in SALT that is not made explicit and we wonder to what extent they relate happily or not together in SALT. This comes out in some confusion between PERFORMANCE and LEARNING in the documentation that we would like to discuss further.

Sometimes they are used as if they are the same thing and at other times they are seen as different. “Performance is a measure of expression of learning” (*SALT Blueprint, p. 21*). The concern for standards, which we support, can paradoxically emphasise

outcomes at the expense of the actual process of learning. So, for example, in Standards based Teaching and Learning standards are needed for content and performance but not for learning itself (*SALT Blueprint, p.2*). In the important diagram on page 2, Curriculum, Assessment and Instruction are identified but not Learning, and we wondered why. This also raises a question about the definitions of learning that are in use in SALT.

Another question we have is whether the evidence from formative assessment is seen as valid data in both self-study and in the process of judging a school. 'The most important factor in determining whether a classroom is standards based is whether teachers analyse and annotate students work' (*Standards Based Teaching and Learning, p. 5*) which, as described, is summative assessment. There isn't mention there of the crucial role in learning of the quality of the process of the dialogue and feedback to students as their work is in process.

Finally, a question about a possible tension. Both self-study and visit involve teachers and other educators in a new professional role, which, if it is to be done effectively, may require the development of particular skills: lesson observation, feedback, interpretation of quantitative and qualitative data, and others. SALT certainly familiarises its participants with the purposes and protocols of the process: does it yet provide skills development for participants, as part of its quality assurance procedures? Who could provide such training?

#### Documentary Examples that convey DISSONANCE in SALT

We suggest that there are at least 4 main dissonances in the documentation to which we want to draw attention:

First, the definition of accountability (which is a crucial design feature) is described in *SALT Blueprint* as the way that educators are connected to the public. Yet one of the 10 key messages that we have identified is the importance of connecting to the learners, we would like to suggest that the primary accountability of a school is to the learners and from there other accountabilities flow. This dissonance is also seen in the descriptions of roles in the process of SALT that don't suggest a primary stake holding for the students.

The second dissonance is about teacher/school performance. *SALT Works p. 4* is quite clear that "SALT means an end to policies of assigning blame and meting out punishments and rewards." Yet on page 40 of *the SALT Blueprint* we read that there should be a series of disincentives for schools that fail to improve including the phrase "weeding out weak teachers." Skeptics about SALT could

be forgiven for wondering if this is an evaluation system with a wolf in the middle of it dressed in sheep's clothing!

The third and fourth dissonances are connected. In the documentation as a whole there is some confusion over the end of the SALT process. Much of the early documentation assumes that the process ends when School Improvement Teams, not the visiting team, have made decisions about what the actions should be: it is implicit throughout, and sometimes explicit, that reviewing the plan is the end of the process. Externally, the School Support and Intervention Agreement is another statement of intent drawn up by school, district and Department of Education. There is little said about the implementation or management of change, or indeed about 'action'. This is, too, a matter for the school only: "neither the district nor the state takes action based on the report" (*Using the School Visit Report, p. 1*).

Granted the persistence of local media, it seems optimistic to reassure schools that "The school will not be judged by the content of the report but by how it uses the report" (*Preparing to Host a School Visit, p. 1*). Yet the later '*Guidance for Field Service Teams*' and '*Guidance for Superintendents*' provide guidelines for the Compact for Learning, which clearly involves district personnel, and assumes that the school will implement change rather than simply plan it. In this context, the clear distinction between acting on the report's messages and acting on what the school does with the report becomes difficult to sustain. Even if SALT is apprehensive about appearing to prescribe what actions schools should take, perhaps the model of the process should emphasise more consistently that a vital stage in the process is action taken on the basis of the evidence gathered and discussed in self-study, or during and after the visit. Granted the gap between paper policy and reality in many accountability systems, and granted the apparent derision with which School Improvement Plans are greeted in many American schools, it seems good sense to stress the importance of active implementation as a crucial stage in the cycle of review.

#### Summary of issues for further discussion

The key points for further exploration include:

- ◆ The relationship between standards, learning, assessment, performance and achievement. Is learning a servant to performance rather than an equal partner in the process? Is SALT Principle 4 compatible with the philosophy of SALT?

- ◆ Is there a dissonance between the image of all students being able to learn and being successful, compared with the high profile given to closing the gaps in performance?
- ◆ Are the SALT principles compatible with the philosophy and essence of SALT: partnership, active role of students, teachers and schools?
- ◆ The nature and purposes of accountability
- ◆ the engagement of pupils and their teachers in the evaluation process
- ◆ who has the responsibility for evaluating the 'web' of support?
- ◆ is the evaluation of the curriculum in action included in the process?
- ◆ Is the culture for school improvement part of the evaluation process?
- ◆ How is the quality of the visit evaluated? For the visited? For the visitors? What training, if any, is required to improve the quality? Is the same training helpful in improving self-study?
- ◆ The respective roles of school, district and state in the process. Is it possible for the visiting team, for example, to evaluate how equitably the district distributes its resources?
- ◆ The balance between SALT as a process of evidence gathering, analysis and planning on the one hand, and as a tool for action for school improvement on the other
- ◆ There is, overall, some dissonance between the key messages of SALT in the documentation and the Principles. Is compromise possible?

James Learmonth

Jane Reed

May 2001

## Source of Evidence Document # 2.2

### TOWARDS A CRITIQUE OF SALT DESIGN:

#### AN ADDENDUM IN THE LIGHT OF DISCUSSIONS ON 21/22 MAY 2001 AT RIDE

We promised to draw together several main issues arising from the two days discussion. Seen in isolation, they may seem over-critical. They should be seen in the context of the large measure of consistency and clarity that we found in the design. And, also, in the context of our great respect for the process and those involved in it.

The seven issues are these:

- ◆ The nature of 'learning'. We distinguished between 'standards', 'performance', 'achievement' and 'learning'. If SALT is about school accountability for 'learning and teaching', there are in the current design several confusions around these terms. We suggested that students learning about their own learning was a particularly strong enabling process.
- ◆ We pointed out that in a school where individual teachers might be assessed as excellent practitioners, the culture for school improvement might still be weak. Do SALT procedures consistently pick up this apparent paradox?
- ◆ We applauded the meticulous way in which SALT visitors to school are 'guardians of the process of inquiry' (Michael's powerful phrase, picked up later by Peter McWalters). We suggested, however, that this guardianship should not take primary place over shaping the findings of the visit in ways that make them accessible to schools. Some of the literature, and some of the Fellows' oral reports, suggest that the experience for visitors of a 'successful' visit is the *end* of the process, rather than a *means* for helping schools improve. To balance things out, should more attention now be given to making sure the school uses a SALT report than to further refinement of the tools of inquiry?
- ◆ We remain of the view that further skills training (rather than familiarization with SALT procedures) would provide visitors with more developed capacity to identify and express judgments that would help schools improve. We noted difficulties around what somebody referred to as 'bringing in the baggage of effective practice in one's own school'.

- ◆ As a group, we mentioned (but did not have time to develop) the idea of a framework, which required, at different levels, people to give an account and take responsibility for their learning and actions based on their learning. The levels were:
  - Individual student
  - Individual teacher
  - Team of teachers
  - School
  - District
  - State
- ◆ Our fundamental anxiety remains focused on the capacity of school, district and state to move the school on after SALT self-evaluation and/or visit. We note aspirations for further ‘plans’ and ‘Compacts’: paper plans and agreements may be a good first stage, but who will support/challenge the school in the thick of the action, in the messy process of the management of change?
- ◆ Finally, while we know that the Principles of SALT may be written for a different audience from the audience that reads the key messages in the documentation, we note some dissonance. This is not surprising, or worrying, in a process that is maturing over time: it simply underlines the need for constant up dating and refinement.

James Learmonth  
Jane Reed  
July 2001

## **SOURCE OF EVIDENCE # 3 PERCEPTIONS OF SALT**

### **Overview**

The purpose of this source of evidence was to gain an understanding of the content of how critical participant and stakeholder groups perceived SALT.

Perceptions are a critical source of feedback information. They help explain acceptance, and resistance about SALT on the part of key participants. This is of central importance to the SALT design because a central tenet is that the schools and not RIDE have the responsibility for doing the work that makes the difference in improving student learning.

The research team sought to honor the commitment to bring strong, and sometimes negative, views about SALT to the attention of SALT and RIDE leadership. The details are in these documents.

Marilyn Crocker and Ann Abeille, both members of the research team, carried out the work on this source of evidence.

### **STEPS**

1. Researchers conducted individual and group interviews with school administrators, school improvement team chairs, and a large percent of staff members, as well as a few parents in each school.
2. They collected artifacts from each school including items such as school improvement plans, agendas for school improvement team meetings and other self-study documents.
3. They summarized the findings from the two-day data gathering at each of the schools and provided them to the full research team (RIDE staff person, senior researcher, both researchers).
4. The full research team developed a document of initial conclusions from the site visits.
5. The researchers then facilitated text-based focus groups with three related groups: 1) school administrators, school improvement team chairs, and other staff members from five of the six schools studied; 2) district administrators representing the district perspective of the schools studied; and 3) field service team representatives from the school regions. These focus groups were designed to make sure from the school participants that the conclusions document adequately captured the content of their schools' feedback

- on the SALT process, and to gather the additional perspective and reactions of the district personnel and field service team members.
6. The full research team met to discuss the feedback from the focus groups and agree upon changes to be made to the conclusions document.
  7. The researchers then made the agreed upon minor adjustments to the conclusions document.
  8. Supplementary focus group reports were developed by the senior analysts in order to capture feedback from the district administrators and field service team members that went beyond the school case study conclusions document.
  9. The researchers conducted a focus group with SALT fellows and prepared a report, which is Document # 3.7.
  10. In May 2001, both researchers observed a RIASP meeting in which RIDE staff and the senior researcher presented information to the group about SALT and the results of an initial study of the content of SALT school visit reports on how reports considered how well principals and local school leadership support improved learning and teaching.
  11. The researchers developed and agreed upon a document summarizing the proceedings and the comments of the principals.
  12. One of the researchers was asked to facilitate a spring meeting of one of the regional field service teams.
  13. Permission was requested for use of the notes from the meeting as evidence to be included within a previously developed report on field service team perspectives.
  14. Additional findings about this meeting were added to the summary of field service team members' perceptions.
  15. Marilyn and Ann then considered all the evidence and findings they had generated. They built a set of overall findings and prepared *Source of Evidence Document # 3.1: Overall Findings Regarding Perceptions of SALT*.

## DOCUMENTS

- 3.1 *Overall Findings Regarding Perceptions of SALT*
- 3.2 *School Site Visit Conclusions*
- 3.3 *School Principal's Perceptions*
- 3.4 *District Administrator's Perceptions*

- 3.5 *Perceptions of Members of RIDE Field Service Teams*
- 3.6 *Perceptions of Members of Little SALT leadership Team*
- 3.7 *SALT Fellow Perceptions*
- 3.8 *Analysis of Reflections of SALT Team Members*

#### **LIMITATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR PHASE TWO**

In hindsight, it became clear that the sample of schools used in the school visit work was probably skewed in a way that presented some problems for the research team. While the team did not agree completely on the importance of the skewed sample, there was agreement that it turned out not to be a good sample of schools to gain a full picture of how Rhode Island schools perceive SALT.

“Case studies” to understand in some depth how schools as institutions respond to SALT should be continued in phase two. The phase one plan to collect information across a wide range and number of Rhode Island schools should be completed in phase two to ensure that the research team has information for an analysis of how Rhode Island schools as a whole perceive SALT and of variances between them. This will make it possible to answer questions like: How important is the school’s first reaction to a visit report in its long term use of the report and in its perceptions of SALT?

## Source of Evidence Document # 3.1

### OVERALL FINDINGS REGARDING PERCEPTIONS OF SALT

#### Introduction

The following findings discuss five of the six accountability elements of the RIDE Accountability System and SALT Design, specifically with respect to how the activities in support of each element have fulfilled the element's intent to date. (The sixth element is being addressed as part of the external critique of the SALT design.)

The findings were drawn from an analysis of perceptions of various constituencies gathered through two-day site visits to six schools, as well as additional interviews, focus groups, document analysis and other activities conducted by Ann Abeille and Marilyn Crocker between January and June 2001. The full texts of the source of evidence documents follow. They are referenced in this discussion with the following code:

- 3.2: *Perceptions of Schools (including teachers, administrators, non-teaching staff, parents and SIT members)*
- 3.3: *Perceptions of Principals (RIASP meeting)*
- 3.4: *Perceptions of District Personnel*
- 3.5: *Perceptions of Field Service*
- 3.6: *Perceptions of SALT Staff*
- 3.7: *Perceptions of SALT Fellows*

These findings represent the researchers' best professional judgment.

#### **Findings about Accountability Element #2: Local School Leadership Dedicated to Improving Student Learning**

The intents of this accountability element, as specified in the system framework matrix (see page 16) are as follows:

- ◆ Provide broad-based representation at the school and in the community
- ◆ Develop broad-based appreciation of, and expertise in, promoting the development of a learning organization
- ◆ Create consensus on directions and actions a school will pursue
- ◆ Distribute the workload
- ◆ Create buy-in

The SALT activities that support this element are:

- ◆ School Improvement Teams (SIT)
- ◆ SALT Guide on forming a SIT

While most schools have established school improvement teams, they represent different points on a continuum of effectiveness -- from highly intentional, broad-based leadership cadres that meet regularly and are dedicated to improving student learning to purely symbolic groups of people who perform perfunctory duties of budget approval. Although it is now widely accepted in RI that every school must have a school improvement team, there is great variation from school to school in team make-up; function and operations; leadership; authority; and support. Teams generally work most effectively when they establish settings that promote collegiality and have time for back-and-forth communication that allows teachers, administrators and community members to create new knowledge about student learning, teaching and the school. Often, but not always, the principal can model this process and lead in it becoming common practice (3.2; 3.5; 3.6).

Key factors that contribute to the formation and development of effective local school leadership dedicated to improving student learning include:

- ◆ SIT membership that reflects the diversity of school and community constituents (3.2; 3.5)
- ◆ Meeting times for the SIT that support full attendance (3.2; 3.5)
- ◆ SIT agendas that focus on priority school improvement initiatives (3.2; 3.5)
- ◆ Meeting facilitation that encourages broad input, thoughtful discussion and information-based decision-making (3.2; 3.5)
- ◆ Administrative or outside guidance in team effectiveness (3.2; 3.5)

Key factors that hinder the development of effective local school leadership include:

- ◆ Confusion about how to make the transition from school-based teams that preceded SALT to the current mandated school improvement teams (3.2; 3.4; 3.5)
- ◆ A number of separate but unconnected teams or task forces working within the school on specific initiatives that work against leadership coherence (3.2; 3.4; 3.5)

- ◆ Financial constraints and the size of the school (3.2; 3.4; 3.5)
- ◆ Ambiguity about where authority actually resides for making decisions about improving student learning (3.2; 3.5)
- ◆ Limited expertise in building strong school/community communication systems that keep all constituents informed and continuously build understanding and buy-in (3.2; 3.5)

Teams that do not function at a high level cannot effectively meet the daunting challenges posed by the process of school change. Teams that do function at a high level contribute to organizational coherence, and can promote the common vision, personal mastery, team learning and systems thinking that characterize a learning organization. (3.2; 3.5)

**Findings about Accountability Element #3: Ongoing gathering of evidence and using this evidence to develop findings and recommendations for change that will promote improved student learning by increasing the professional skill and knowledge of teachers and enhancing the school's ability to support learning**

The intents of this accountability element, as specified in the system framework matrix are as follows:

- ◆ Create understanding of where and when learning is happening, and not
- ◆ Develop educators' ability to respond to students who are not learning well enough
- ◆ Create understanding and consensus of how the structures and services of the school do, and do not, promote the development of professional expertise among its educators and good learning among its students

The SALT activities that support this element are:

- ◆ School self-study
- ◆ SALT guide on self-study
- ◆ SALT guides on particular self-study activities

Schools show a wide range of depth and extent of implementation of school self-study processes and strategies. On one hand, some schools use most of the strategies including analysis of SALT survey data, examining student work, following students, and conducting analyses of test scores and other student performance

data. They involve most of the faculty, incorporate the SALT strategies into yearly self-study, and use the information to shape their planning. On the other hand, in some schools the self-study process is limited to a series of activities conducted in order to be ready for the SALT visit. In other cases self-study is undertaken as part of a school's attempt to develop its first school improvement plan, and does not represent an ongoing, systemic process of evidence gathering, reflection and analysis, and building findings (3.2). Many schools still involve only 15-20% of faculty in self-study work (3.7). In some cases self-study is undertaken by a small group of volunteers. This approach rarely permits self-study findings to be disseminated and processed in such a way that the faculty as a whole comes to understand and claim ownership for the resulting insights (3.2).

RIDE training for self-study work is deemed as helpful, but often overwhelming for SIT chairs, with too much information presented in a short period of time, with little or no follow-up support as the process actually gets underway (3.2). Training information is often not effectively transmitted back to the school and to significant numbers of staff members (3.2, 3.7). RIDE has not provided adequate support to schools in involving most of the school staff, conducting self-study activities, or pulling together the pieces of self-study information into meaningful pictures of the school's support for learning (3.2, 3.5, 3.6, 3.7).

Very few teachers and administrators use SALT self-study guides and most have little awareness of the existence of the guides or other resources on the SALT web site. The practitioners who do use the guides find them helpful but emphasize that they are not enough in themselves and that more and ongoing training in self-study is required (3.2).

While some teachers said the SALT survey served as a springboard for reflection on practice, many more described specific aspects of the SALT survey that lessen its perceived usefulness to their work and to the SALT self-study. They mention its excessive length; the compromised readability of certain versions; its redundancy, and the inappropriateness of certain items for certain audiences; items which seem to prescribe certain structures and practices as the standard; the interruption in instruction it causes; and the declining response rates over time which compromise its ability to serve as an indicator of change in practice. These perceptions of the SALT survey minimize teachers' valuing of the self-study, particularly in schools where only a few teachers are involved in the fuller self-study process. In general, teachers are unaware of

the survey's potential (when used consistently over time) as a source of longitudinal data. (3.2, 3.4, 3.5)

The quality of self-study in schools is improving, largely through the experience of more and more teachers on visiting teams and through school efforts to learn from the experiences of other schools that have gone through self-study and the school visit. (3.4)

In some schools SALT self-study creates a positive momentum focused on school change and increases teachers' and administrators' sense of professional accountability. This happens when self-study is set in context, well facilitated, and thoughtfully executed. To a limited extent, in some schools, teachers intentionally change aspects of their own classroom practice based on findings of school self-studies and SALT visit reports (3.2).

The schools that are best prepared for the visit and for using the SALT visit report findings are the ones that have conducted a strong self-study involving much of the faculty as well as ones in which many faculty members have served on a visiting team. Weak self-studies are sometimes linked with ineffective school improvement teams, lack of shared leadership in the school, lack of use of the self-study guide (3.2, 3.7). Some schools and districts openly devalue the SALT process, including the self-study. (3.7)

Schools with solid self-studies find few surprises in the SALT reports, whereas, in schools where there is less self-study there is more dissonance with the visiting team's report (3.2, 3.7). Many schools find that SALT reports do not adequately recognize the schools' self-study work—neither the specific findings nor the depth, quality, and breadth of staff involvement (3.2).

***Findings about Accountability Element # 4: School-based Planning and Discussions that lead to public descriptions of how the school intends to strengthen its capacity to improve learning of all students by changing teaching and the school environment***

The intents of this accountability element, as specified in the system framework matrix are as follows:

- ◆ Create understanding and consensus about how the structures and services of the school do, and do not, promote the development of professional expertise among educators and learning among students.
- ◆ Use sound findings and evidence-based recommendations to detail how the school will enhance student learning, teaching and support for learning and teaching.

The SALT activities that support this element are:

- ◆ School Improvement Plans
- ◆ SALT Guides

Although some schools consult the available SALT guides for creating a School Improvement Plan (SIP), most are not yet able to form plans that are useful and focused without considerable support from the district or state. A growing number of schools routinely engage in a process of self-study to guide decisions about school improvement. However, few use the recommendations from their SALT report as additional information to inform the process of revising their SIP. (3.2; 3.5; 3.6)

The following are some key factors that influence strong school-based planning and discussions leading to public descriptions of how a school intends to improve:

- ◆ A governance infrastructure that includes 1) an effectively operating school improvement team with outreach beyond its members to the wider-constituencies it represents, and 2) a variety of feedback mechanisms to allow for ongoing reporting to and input-gathering from constituencies (3.5; 3.6)
- ◆ The ongoing use of self-study as a means of understanding how students are learning and how instructional practice and school structures support student learning (3.2; 3.5; 3.6)
- ◆ A planning process that develops evidence-based findings and recommendations for practical action (3.2; 3.4; 3.5)
- ◆ An implementation process that allows actions to be easily managed, evaluated and periodically refocused. (3.2; 3.4; 3.5)
- ◆ Availability of external support from the district or the state to develop a school's capacity to effectively plan and implement school improvement efforts (3.2; 3.4; 3.5; 3.6)

Most SITs and school personnel do not yet clearly understand how the SALT components -- school improvement team formation, school self-study, school improvement planning, visit team feedback to the school, school improvement plan revision, compact development and action-plan implementation – fit together as a coherent and potentially powerful process to improve student learning. (3.2; 3.3; 3.4; 3.5; 3.6)

**Findings about Accountability Element # 5: Strong connections between schools, their families, their community, their supporters, and other stakeholders**

The intents of this accountability element, as specified in the system framework matrix are as follows:

- ◆ Develop understanding of, and support for, the teaching that is taking place in the school
- ◆ Develop understanding of and support of, the mission, objectives and improvement activities of the school
- ◆ Create opportunities for feedback on, and participation in, school improvement processes

The SALT activities that support this element are:

- ◆ School Report Night
- ◆ Participation on School Improvement Team
- ◆ SALT Parent Survey

While most school improvement teams include parents and community members, a concern is raised among school staff members that the majority of other parents do not understand the school accountability process, nor have they been effectively informed about the SALT system. Many parents lack good understanding of the process of self-study, the use of data to inform decision-making, the role of the school visit, and the meaning of the school report.

Some schools have made strong and successful efforts to present information to parents and community members through school and team events as well as student led conferencing, but these models are not yet widely shared. Three-quarters of the schools share state assessment results and other information works data at the fall open house. However, the school report night as a one-time event has neither generated good understanding about school accountability for student learning and teaching, nor effective engagement of the public in the accountability process. Many schools still struggle with how to communicate complex concepts simply and in multiple languages (3.2, 3.5, 3.6). Furthermore, an effort to educate families about SALT using Information Works data tends to generalize progress to the school level, when parents are more interested in their own child's individual progress (3.5).

School report night remains an underdeveloped opportunity for schools to engage their public about the meaning and use of SALT (3.2, 3.5, 3.6).

**Findings about Accountability Element #6: Strong supportive relations between schools, their district, their school committee and RIDE**

The intent of this accountability element, as specified in the system framework matrix is as follows:

- ◆ Develop knowledge that will allow districts, school committees and RIDE to support improvement efforts of schools and to intervene appropriately when schools demonstrate an inability to improve

The SALT activities that support this element are:

- ◆ SALT school visits
- ◆ RIDE Field Service Teams support to schools
- ◆ Compact for Learning
- ◆ District support to schools
- ◆ District activities that create information that helps schools improve
- ◆ District Strategic Plans

***SALT School Visits***

The SALT school visit is a major opportunity for knowledge development to support improvement efforts of schools. For many schools the preparation for hosting a SALT visit sparks the conduct of school self-study and the development of a school improvement plan. This often initiates the process of intentional knowledge creation about student learning and teaching practice. (3.2; 3.3; 3.5; 3.6; 3.7)

The SALT school visit and the visit report furthers the development of knowledge in some schools in various ways:

- ◆ It confirms already recognized areas of need;
- ◆ It serves as a “wake-up call” to action;
- ◆ It lends needed pressure for change;
- ◆ It serves to catalyze accelerated change;
- ◆ It encourages increased involvement by the district and enhanced district understanding of its schools, as well as increased district and state support for school improvement. (3.2; 3.4; 3.5)

Some schools are able to use the SALT report to further knowledge creation about how to improve learning and teaching relatively soon after the visit. However, others are delayed in using the report

to improve learning and teaching and still others continue to wrestle with how to use the visiting team findings and recommendations because of negative perceptions of the visit experience. These include perceptions that the school orientation for the visit was confusing and incomplete; the visit team composition and expertise was poorly matched to the school; the style of some visitors was abrupt and officious; visit team observations were not based on clear standards and evidence gathered to form findings was incomplete; and visit reports have a negative tone, lack enough specificity to be useful, and are frequently misunderstood because there is no opportunity for the school to discuss visit team findings with the team. (3.2; 3.3; 3.4)

The degree to which schools were able to benefit from the SALT school visit and visit report was influenced by a number of conditions:

- ◆ Whether the school engaged in a thorough self-study process prior to the SALT visit and allowed those findings to become known and understood by the faculty as a whole (3.2; 3.3; 3.5; 3.6; 3.7)
- ◆ Whether the school staff believed the report reflected a fair and full acknowledgment of existing qualities and practices that support effective teaching and learning (3.2; 3.3; 3.5)
- ◆ Whether the staff believed the visiting team is well trained and represents appropriate and relevant expertise (3.2; 3.3; 3.4; 3.5)
- ◆ Whether press coverage about the school visit and visit report were perceived by the school community as negative, slanted or presented out of context and resulted in undeserved public embarrassment (3.2; 3.3; 3.4)
- ◆ Whether administrators and faculty discussed and processed the visit report to understand what the visit team meant (3.2; 3.3; 3.5; 3.6)
- ◆ Whether the visit was scheduled to minimize distraction from extenuating factors, such as administrative turnover, NEASC preparation, the opening of school (3.2; 3.3; 3.4; 3.5; 3.6)
- ◆ Whether the administrators and faculty understood the purpose and methodology of the school visit as one element in a system of accountability for school

improvement and enhanced student learning. (3.2; 3.5; 3.6)

RIDE SALT staff made refinements to help the school visit generate more useful knowledge for schools. These include:

- ◆ developing a written protocol for the Visit
- ◆ emphasizing the nested nature of the focus areas with student learning at the heart
- ◆ focusing evidence gathering by the team on student learning; and strengthening the findings in the visit report. Staff have identified important additional questions to inform further refinement. (3.6; 3.7)

The SALT school visit experience enhanced the professional capacity of individual visiting team members to develop knowledge about their own schools and to sharpen intervention practices in support of school improvement. (3.2; 3.6; 3.7; 3.8)

#### ***RIDE Field Service Support to Schools***

RIDE field service to schools provided a further opportunity to extend and deepen the development of knowledge to support school improvement efforts. Field service teams provided support to schools in the following areas:

- ◆ Preparation of school self study
- ◆ Development of school improvement plan
- ◆ Formulation of action teams
- ◆ Development of school compact
- ◆ Planning for Article 31 funds
- ◆ Other capacity-building activities requested by district or school (3.2; 3.4; 3.5)

However, field service support to schools has not been consistent across the state because RIDE has not been able to commit itself fully to supporting the SALT process and the improvement efforts of schools. Contributing to this is insufficient numbers of personnel available for the numbers of schools that need support, especially in light of staff reduction; limited expertise in needed support areas; considerable additional responsibilities borne by many staff in other aspects of department work; and the absence of will on the part of staff members of all field service teams to fully engage in SALT. (3.2; 3.4; 3.5). Where a team has chosen to work together to make a concerted effort to serve as supportive consultants to a targeted number of schools on the full spectrum

of SALT activities, both schools and districts have benefited. (3.2; 3.4; 3.5)

### ***School Compact***

The school compact is relatively undeveloped as an activity in support of this accountability element. Although compacts have been developed for a great number of schools that had a SALT visit since 1999, this is the result of a fairly recent effort, and there is little information about impact on school improvement. (3.5)

District participation in the compact has been compromised because the form, process and function of the compact has undergone constant change and the financial commitments of RIDE and the district have not been defined clearly and consistently. (3.4; 3.5)

### ***District Activities and Support to Schools***

District support to schools around SALT activities varies widely, from little attention to active engagement in strengthening school capacity. (3.2; 3.4; 3.5) Some districts solicit assistance from RIDE field service to guide the direction of school improvement planning while others refuse assistance when it is offered. (3.5) Some districts are unclear about how best to support schools in their participation in the SALT process. District support is compromised when district personnel are not actively included in guiding and reflecting with schools on an ongoing basis and are not kept informed of changes in the SALT system. Many districts are unsure about whether the district strategic plan drives school improvement planning or local school improvement plans inform the district's direction. (3.4) Many districts are hampered in providing professional development because of a severe shortage of substitutes, while other districts are so limited in staff that their ability to engage with schools is negligible. (3.2; 3.4; 3.5)

### ***Recommendations***

On the basis of the research activities previously noted, we offer two sets of recommendations to RIDE: on *Broad Issues* and on *SALT Activities*. These are set in the context of the preceding findings about how SALT is currently perceived.

#### ***Broad Issues***

Despite widespread belief in the inherent value and potential of SALT, we find the prevalence of three responses or themes that threaten the long-term acceptance and implementation of the SALT process:

- ◆ Lack of ownership,

- ◆ Resentment, and
- ◆ Confusion over the primary purposes of SALT (school improvement vs. accountability).

The first set of recommendations we offer are designed to build a greater sense of personal and institutional ownership of SALT; diffuse the high levels of resentment of SALT on the part of school and district practitioners and other school stakeholders; and clarify, reinforce, and at times differentiate the purposes of SALT.

***In order to build a greater sense of personal and institutional ownership of SALT, we recommend that RIDE:***

- ◆ Draw in practitioners from across the state to work collaboratively with RIDE staff to troubleshoot/redesign/rework parts of the SALT process that have been identified as problematic by the pilot feedback process.
- ◆ Develop structures, such as focus groups, for ongoing troubleshooting of SALT processes by a broad set of constituencies based on SALT feedback data.
- ◆ Provide opportunities for a broader group of practitioners and parents from across the state to become deeply steeped in the art and science of school visits.
- ◆ Develop deeper practitioner expertise within districts available to provide help to schools with self-study and preparing for visits.
- ◆ Provide (through RIDE or districts) more forums and support for open, frank dialogue about school improvement generally, and SALT specifically, especially involving personnel from the school, district, and state levels—beyond the model of RIDE training for schools preparing for a SALT visit.
- ◆ Provide structures, training, and materials to build more involvement of district personnel in the SALT process with their schools.
- ◆ Provide more forums throughout the state in which many more practitioners and citizens can find the opportunity to voice their ideas and concerns to neutral parties as listeners and data gatherers without being put in the position of defending their points of view or experiences with SALT, e.g., focus groups of school

administrators, school improvement team members, parents, district administrators.

- ◆ Broadly and openly share the findings and recommendations that emerge from research conducted on SALT, including RIDE intentions for change.

***In order to diffuse the resentment of SALT where it exists on the part of school and district practitioners and other school stakeholders, we recommend that RIDE:***

- ◆ In the redesign or rework of certain elements of the SALT process, pay particular attention to suggestions stemming from concerns raised again and again by practitioners (including visiting team members) about aspects of the school visit and report that tend to build negativity and defensiveness on the part of schools and districts and sometimes overwhelm the positive impact of other elements of SALT, such as momentum created through the self-study, e.g.,

Clearer expectations concerning the focus of the team visit;

More consistency and greater expertise and professionalism among visiting teams;

More opportunities for collegial dialogue between the visiting team and school staff throughout the visit;

Better guidance for positive ways for the school community to process the report;

Opportunities for schools to respond in some satisfying manner to the SALT report; and

Substantive support in using the SALT report to plan and implement changes that will support improved student learning.

- ◆ Work with practitioners in the field to clarify the roles and responsibilities (including funding responsibilities) of districts in supporting their schools through self-study, hosting the SALT visit, processing the SALT report, and supporting school change planning and action.
- ◆ Establish ongoing communication with local media to establish more informed understanding of SALT (the objectives of SALT, the role of the SALT visit, and what

the visit is and is not) and to provide feedback on articles published concerning SALT reports.

***In order to clarify, reinforce and (when necessary) differentiate among the complex purposes of SALT (school improvement vs. accountability), we recommend that RIDE:***

- ◆ Hold forums within RIDE and in the field in an effort to address the thorny differentiation among use of SALT for school improvement (that requires school initiative, motivation, and buy-in), use of SALT for school accountability (particularly in terms of forcing change in the relatively small number of schools that are failing dramatically), and the use of SALT as a system of nested levels of accountability for student learning (state, district, community, school, teacher, and student).
- ◆ Explore more deeply (through research and every day communication with the field) and work to avoid the mixed messages that are being received about the purposes of SALT, e.g., on the one hand, that the school visit and report are billed as useful information from outside colleagues designed to support school learning, planning, and growth, and then upon receipt of the report are experienced as a passing of judgment that is handed down in a negative fashion with no opportunity for discussion.
- ◆ Promote clearer definition and communication of roles and responsibilities for school improvement and accountability across school, district, and state levels, e.g. clarification of:
  - Issues around alignment of school and district plans;
  - State and district responsibilities for holding schools accountable; and
  - Consequences of non-implementation.

We believe that unless RIDE pays continuous attention to these broader issues of ownership, resentment, and confusion even the best designed and well-intentioned accountability system will not improve student learning over the long term.

### ***SALT Activities***

This second set of recommendations is intended to strengthen specific SALT activities in order to more fully realize the intents of SALT.

***In order to broaden support for school self-study we recommend that RIDE:***

- ◆ Promote wider participation of school staff in school self-study activities
- ◆ Encourage and support schools' use of self study guides
- ◆ Communicate the relationship of ongoing school self-study to continuous school improvement planning and implementation
- ◆ Provide schools with resources and training to enhance capacity to observe, investigate, analyze and describe student learning
- ◆ Provide guidance to schools on how to use the school survey as a source of information for school improvement planning and consider revising the instrument to make it more useful to schools
- ◆ Revise guidance to schools to more strongly suggest that they write findings based on the evidence they have gathered
- ◆ Provide feedback to schools on the quality of their self-study process and product
- ◆ Clarify how the district can support schools in the self-study process
- ◆ Work to align the NEASC and SALT self-study processes
- ◆ Address school reports of flawed data recording

***In order to strengthen the visit team composition and capacity we recommend that RIDE:***

- ◆ Develop tools to deepen visit teams' ability to observe and assess student learning and make recommendations
- ◆ Strengthen visit team training, especially in terms of building visitor capacity to more accurately gather evidence about student learning, instructional practice and the school as a community and to make judgments based on common standards and measures
- ◆ Ensure visit team members represent appropriately matched expertise and experience for making informed, unbiased judgments about the school being visited
- ◆ Enlarge the parent pool and providing separate training and materials

***In order to enhance the usefulness of the visit and the visit report we recommend that RIDE:***

- ◆ Revise the school orientation to establish a collegial atmosphere prior to the visit and help every staff member understand the visit's purpose, design and follow-up
- ◆ Review school visit schedule regularly to avoid distractions that compromise the school's ability to fully participate
- ◆ Consider changing the team guidance for recommendations to be more specific
- ◆ Recognize more explicitly in the report a school's strengths and accomplishments and the work currently underway to address important issues
- ◆ Conduct text-based feedback sessions with schools to learn what specifically in the SALT reports creates the perception of "negative tone."
- ◆ Consider ways to present the report to the school as an opportunity for reflective dialogue within the school, based on a clear protocol, with the report's findings and recommendations available for all present
- ◆ Explore ways to involve school principals and district administrators in helping schools to process, understand and use SALT reports

***In order to empower the school improvement planning and implementation process we recommend that RIDE:***

- ◆ Continue to establish the school improvement team's leadership role in the system of school accountability for student learning and teaching
- ◆ Revise school improvement planning guides to incorporate the visit report as a planning input and the school compact as a commitment to action priorities
- ◆ Clarify currently ambiguous aspects of the school compact, including its form and timing; the roles of school, district and state in its development; the availability of additional resources to support agreements reflected in the compact; and accountability, evaluation and follow-up of results
- ◆ Develop resources and provide consultation to support the implementation of action plans, including how to

establish an implementation infrastructure; track and monitor implementation progress; conduct reviews and midcourse corrections; and measure and evaluate impact

- ◆ Spotlight schools that can serve as exemplars for others in forming and nurturing a high-performing school improvement team, developing a plan (based on self-study and informed by the SALT visit) and implementing effective action to improve student learning
- ◆ Conduct periodic evaluation sessions with RIDE staff who serve the field to identify what is working to support school improvement planning, what needs to be done differently, and what has been learned
- ◆ Build the capacity of RIDE staff to work with schools as coaches, facilitators and collaborative problem-solvers

## Source of Evidence Document # 3.2

### SCHOOL SITE VISIT FINDINGS

#### Introduction

The following findings were based on data collected by Marilyn Crocker and Ann Abeille during two-day school site visits to each of six schools in January 2001. Schools were selected by RIDE on the basis of the following criteria: representative of a range of levels and various socio-economic settings; available to participate in the site visits on short notice; and having hosted a SALT visit approximately 12-18 months earlier so that impact could be explored.

During the site visits researchers conducted interviews with 73 teachers, including the chairs of School Improvement Teams; nine administrators; and 14 parents. They also analyzed documents provided to them during the site visits, which included:

- ◆ SIT agendas
- ◆ Curriculum documents
- ◆ SIT minutes
- ◆ SI Plans, including action plans
- ◆ Revised class schedule
- ◆ Formats used by the school for reviewing visit report
- ◆ Printed resources used by the school to support efforts to implement standards based instruction and assessment
- ◆ Student agenda book
- ◆ Teacher written reflection on the experience of going on a visit
- ◆ School SALT visit reports

Initial working findings based on this evidence were developed by the SALT research team, and were modified based on feedback from text-based focus groups conducted by Ann and Marilyn with teachers, administrators, and district office personnel from the sites visited. This feedback served to confirm that the draft findings are fair representations of the perceptions of these schools about SALT. Further triangulation was built into the design by feedback from a focus group the researchers conducted with RIDE field service team representatives. Additional perceptions about SALT by school administrators, district office personnel and RIDE field

service team representatives that are not part of this document are reported in separate memos. The findings that follow are organized around the questioning protocol used during the site visits.

### **Findings**

#### ***Question 1: Is self-study helping our schools understand the learning and learning needs of their students better?***

The SALT self-study design asks schools to collect evidence about their existing practice, to use this evidence to form findings and to use the findings to inform their planning. This approach to self-study places schools on unfamiliar terrain. Because this is unfamiliar terrain, the principal's active involvement is particularly important in communicating the importance of SALT and self-study, encouraging ownership of the self-study work and facilitating the inquiry process.

Schools show a wide range of depth and extent of implementation of school self-study processes and strategies. On one hand, some schools use most of the strategies including analysis of SALT survey data, examining student work, following students, and conducting analyses of test scores and other student performance data. They involve most of the faculty, incorporate the SALT strategies into yearly self-study, and use the information to shape their planning. On the other hand, in some schools the self-study process is limited to a series of activities conducted in order to be ready for the SALT visit. In other cases self-study is undertaken as part of a school's attempt to develop its first school improvement plan, and does not represent an ongoing, systemic process of evidence gathering, reflection and analysis, and finding building. In some cases self-study is undertaken by a small group of volunteers. This approach rarely permits self-study findings to be disseminated and processed in such a way that the faculty as a whole comes to understand and claim ownership for the resulting insights.

Although high school teachers expected that SALT self-study would prepare them for NEASC, some did not find this was the case. When the process of self-study is only directly experienced by a small number of the school staff, the process has not become institutionalized as part of information-based decision making and planning practice within the schools. However, those who do participate in the process generally attest to the value of SALT self-study.

In some schools SALT self-study creates a positive momentum focused on school change and increases teachers' and administrators' sense of professional accountability. This happens

when self-study is set in context, well facilitated, and thoughtfully executed.

Very few teachers and administrators use SALT Self-Study Guides and most have little awareness of the existence of the guides or other resources on the SALT web site. The practitioners who do use the guides find them helpful but emphasize that they are not enough in themselves and that more and ongoing training in self-study is required.

While some teachers said the SALT survey served as a springboard for reflection on practice, many more described specific aspects of the SALT survey that lessen its perceived usefulness to their work and to the SALT self-study. They mention its excessive length; the compromised readability of certain versions; its redundancy, and the inappropriateness of certain items for certain audiences; items which seem to prescribe certain structures and practices as the standard; the interruption in instruction it causes; and the declining response rates over time which compromises its ability to serve as an indicator of change in practice. These perceptions of the SALT survey minimize teachers' valuing of the self-study, particularly in schools where only a few teachers are involved in the fuller self-study process. In general, teachers are unaware of the survey's potential (when used consistently over time) as a source of longitudinal data.

***Question 2: Is the school visit generating useful knowledge to help schools understand better how to improve learning and teaching?***

The schools responded thoughtfully and emotionally concerning the school visit and report, yielding both positive and negative responses to the questions posed.

Overall, schools found the visit and the visit report useful in a number of ways:

- ◆ as a confirmation of already recognized areas of need;
- ◆ as “a wake-up call” to action;
- ◆ as needed pressure for change;
- ◆ as a catalyst for accelerated change;
- ◆ as an encouragement for increased district involvement and enhanced understanding of its schools, as well as increased district and state support for school improvement.

In all schools some administrators, faculty and parents said that it was important to hear the feedback from peers outside the school and that they eventually realized that most of the findings in their

schools' reports were on target and reflected what they had found in their own self-study work. This acknowledgement came after the principal or another administrator had guided the teachers through a process of reflection, helping them see the commendations, allowing them to make connections with what they learned in their self-study, and giving them a chance to say what they agreed with and why.

However, all of the schools in this sample indicated that they experienced the visit as an "assault" and were upset by the report. Negative perceptions from the visit and the report initially obstructed or delayed the schools' understanding of how to improve learning and teaching. These negative perceptions include:

- The confusing nature of the training provided to schools to prepare them for the visit;

- The lack of relevant expertise and experience on the visit team in specific areas such as technology integration, early childhood education, urban school issues, middle school theory, and in more general areas such as knowledge of RIDE policies or instructional knowledge at a master teacher level;

- The insufficient parent representation and match of team members to the type of community of the school;

- A definite bias or agenda that some visiting team members bring (e.g., inclusion, heterogeneous grouping, block scheduling) that impacts the report;

- The limitations of team size and shortness of the visit;

- The unprofessional, disrespectful, and rigid behavior of some team chairs;

- The lack of clarity about what the team is looking for;

- The disappointment that the SALT visit did not model the use of clear standards;

- The abruptness, officiousness and judgmental nature of some visitors;

- The resentment on the part of teachers who were either excluded or cursorily visited;

- The holes in the evidence the team collected;

- The lack of in-depth examination of student work by visiting teams;

- The use of the visit as an opportunity for some school people to vent to the visitors;

The overlooking of programs that are perceived by the school to be important;

The inconsistency between what individual members of the visiting team say to school staff and what the report says;

The breaches of protocol by some visiting team members;

The lack of consistency across the schools in what is examined and discussed in the reports;

The minimum acknowledgment of strengths of the school and emphasis on the negative aspects;

The lack of recognition of the substance of the self-study and the work that is in progress to improve the school;

The negative overtones of reports;

The use of words that trigger strong emotional response;

The lack of specificity in findings and recommendations;

The caustic, abrupt tone in the reading of the report; and

The lack of opportunity to discuss and clarify the report with the visiting team.

The degree to which the schools are able to use the SALT report is influenced by a number of conditions including:

Whether the school has 1) engaged in a self study process that creates an understanding of where, when and how learning is happening and instructional practice is supporting student learning and 2) allowed those findings to become known and understood by the faculty as a whole.

Whether the staff (administration and faculty) believes the visit report includes fair and full acknowledgment of existing qualities and practices that support effective teaching and learning.

Whether the staff believes the visiting team is well trained and represents appropriate and relevant expertise.

Whether press coverage about the school visit and visit report are perceived by the school community as negative, slanted or presented out of context and result in undeserved public embarrassment.

Whether administrators and faculty have discussed and processed the visit report and been able to move beyond the initial shock and defending the school's position to a better understanding of what the team meant.

The scheduling of the visit, with respect to administrative turnover, NEASC preparation, proximity to the beginning of the year, other extenuating factors that distract/consume faculty focus.

How well administrators and faculty understand the purpose and methodology of the school visit as an element of school improvement and can differentiate the objectives of the school visit from other kinds of outside reports for schools.

***Question 3: Is school improvement planning helping our schools take effective action?***

While these schools all have operating school improvement teams, they represent different points on a continuum of effectiveness--from highly intentional, broad based leadership cadres meeting regularly and dedicated to improving student learning to purely symbolic groups of people who perform perfunctory duties of budget approval. Teams that do not function at a high level cannot effectively meet the daunting challenges posed by the process of school change.

Some schools have been able to effectively transition school-based teams that preceded SALT into the school improvement team and working committees. In other schools previously existing teams and other unconnected teams in the school create confusion and pose a challenge to the leadership of the school improvement team. Often these teams do the work of initiatives, such as NEASC, that are not sufficiently integrated with the SALT process to provide coherent leadership for improvement. When this happens, teachers can become distracted, confused and exhausted. Administrators are challenged to provide coherent oversight to often-warring initiatives.

Contractual and financial constraints and the size of the school can lessen the effectiveness of school improvement teams and contribute to scheduling problems. The degree of faculty experience and familiarity with research on best practice influences the quality of the school improvement plan. The difficulty of finding a meeting time that is compatible to both teachers and working parents renders the representation of some SITs skewed, and makes it difficult to include all perspectives necessary for effective leadership.

In some schools, particularly in districts that have created clear expectations for using the SALT visit report, incorporation of insights and recommendations from the reports into school improvement plans is done quickly and easily. However, the planning process that some schools use to do this is slow,

excessively complex and time-consuming, and is experienced by school improvement teams as frustrating and counter-productive. This situation is exacerbated when frequent changes are made in the planning formats and processes required by RIDE.

Some school improvement teams are overly focused on the process of improvement planning. In these instances, planning consumes large amounts of a school's time and energy but results in little effective action. Schools are uncertain about who has the authority for implementation and who will be held accountable.

***Question 4: Is school report night helping the school generate understanding about SALT among its families and community?***

While most school improvement teams include parents and community members, a concern is raised among school staff members that the majority of other parents do not understand the school accountability process, nor have they been effectively informed about the SALT system. Many parents lack good understanding of the process of self-study, the use of data to inform decision-making, the role of the school visit, and the meaning of the school report. This is compounded by the severe difficulties many schools have connecting with their families and the perceived lack of interest on the part of many parents in school wide test score data. Some school personnel find it difficult and distasteful to explain to parents changes in the tests that they believe invalidate test score data. Some raise concerns about finding meaningful ways to communicate SALT data to non English-speaking parents.

Although there are noteworthy efforts to use school report night differently, schools typically conduct a traditional open house with an emphasis on parents meeting individual teachers about student progress, sometimes combined with reporting on school wide data. While this is a good way for schools to connect with their families, it does not perform the function intended for school report night.

School report night remains an underdeveloped opportunity for schools to engage their public about the meaning and use of SALT.

***Question 5: Have the districts and RIDE been effective in supporting the improvement efforts of schools?***

Field Service is nearly absent in schools and when field service teams do work with schools they often have contact with only a small leadership core. School staff (faculty and some administrators) are not generally aware of who their Field Service Team representative is. Although many teachers need specific direction to resources and technical assistance to help them meet identified needs, the Field Service support that exists is largely

dedicated to facilitating the process of planning and developing compacts.

Although the Compact for Learning was designed to focus district support and leadership for schools, compacts are not typically developed between a school, its district and RIDE before a year or longer after the SALT Visit. This means that the teeth of shared accountability are blunted. Furthermore schools are uncertain about the availability and extent of incremental funds required for certain improvement strategies they believe are important to include in the Compact.

***Question 6: What are the conditions in a school that allow it to take advantage of SALT?***

Strong, informed school leadership (administrative, instructional, school improvement team) is key to making it all happen. When administrators and school improvement team chairs do not work together, or when they are unable to guide the school in using SALT resources and activities the school accountability process becomes blocked.

When other reform initiatives (middle school reform, standards, etc.) are conceptually related to the SALT system, teachers are empowered and engaged in the process of school improvement. When initiatives (SALT, CIM, NEASC) remain conceptually unrelated teachers experience fragmentation of effort and are overwhelmed by complexity and apparent redundancy.

Schools and districts vary widely in the extent and quality to which they have mapped curriculum (scope and sequence) and aligned curriculum to standards. They also vary in their understanding of what constitutes a standards-based curriculum. The fact that in some schools curriculum is only partially updated, or was updated prior to Rhode Island's development of frameworks and adoption of New Standards significantly hampers efforts to realize high expectations for the cognitive and affective development of all students.

District support and leadership can play a make-or-break role in encouraging continuous high quality school improvement planning and in advocating for and obtaining the resources, time and personnel required for excellence in action planning implementation.

***Question 7: All in all how well is SALT working to improve learning in Rhode Island schools?***

Most teachers believe that accountability is here to stay and recognize and embrace more fully their personal accountability as

professionals. Schools are in the first stage of making major changes.

SALT's impact on improving learning at local schools is complex and embedded in local, state and national initiatives.

SALT work, particularly the self-study, has promoted increased communication and collegiality among teachers and administrators.

Through SALT, an increased awareness of the need for professional development has developed, along with greater engagement of teachers in professional development.

SALT has instigated in schools much greater use of information and data about the quality of learning and teaching. This includes analysis of test score data, school survey results and other information. Beyond this, schools have begun to use other methods to strengthen their self-knowledge about how well teaching and learning are taking place. These include following students, examining student work and observing colleagues teach. Some schools have discovered how to use this information to inform planning and improve teaching practice.

SALT has provoked an increase in individual and group reflection about teaching and learning practice.

SALT has helped schools to focus and refocus their goals on student achievement, specifically on achievement in math, reading and writing. In some cases this renewed focus on goals has led to aligning school and district goals.

SALT has played a major role in increasing school practitioners' awareness of standards. This awareness has prompted teachers to begin to use standards in their instruction and assessment practice. Their initial progress has increased their openness to learn more and desire to deepen their professional understanding and skills.

The potential for making these changes more widespread is perceived as being limited by a variety of obstacles at the classroom, school, district and state level. Many teachers experience these obstacles as a lack of support for change.

While SALT has generated a general awareness of the importance of change and some particular awareness of the nature of school change, the potential of SALT to provide an integrated, systematic conceptual framework for all school improvement activities has not been realized. The most extreme result is a strong perception in some schools of unproductive fragmentation of efforts.

Although SALT activities have often spotlighted the substantial challenges of inclusion and meeting the needs of students at risk, schools find minimal progress possible given available expertise and resources provided (or not) by districts and RIDE. Issues such as overcrowding and tracking are addressed or ignored because of parental and other community pressures.

***Question 8: What suggestions do educators and parents offer for improvement of the SALT process?***

**Self Study**

Redesign the SALT survey for teachers, parents, and administrators to eliminate redundancy and tailor items on versions administered to elementary and high schools to suit those situations. Generally shorten the survey and use larger fonts for readability. Administer on an every-other or every-three year basis.

Promote wider participation in school self-study activities and encourage and support schools' use of self-study guides.

Provide more and ongoing (perhaps monthly) self-study training for SIT Chairs and principals.

**School Visit**

Strengthen preparation of visit team to allow for greater consistency of team style and team operation across schools, as well as use of common standards for making judgments about a school's performance.

Ensure visit team members represent appropriately matched expertise and experience for making informed judgments about the particular school being visited. Better screening is needed to ensure that people with strong bias or agendas are not included.

Provide a mechanism through which the school can give written feedback on the team at the end of the visit.

Provide more clarity to schools concerning what aspects of the school the visiting team will be addressing.

Begin the visit by the team talking with a small group from the school about the findings of the self-study, addressing both strengths and weaknesses.

Structure time for the visiting team to meet with the whole school staff at the beginning of the visit to establish a more collegial atmosphere.

Reduce the evaluative nature of the visit.

Structure visit team activities so that a more complete picture of the school is made available to the visit team.

Evaluate relationship of SALT visit to NEASC visit for high schools and explore ways to make these complementary rather than duplicative.

Build bridges with media to establish more informed understanding of the objectives of SALT, the role of the SALT visit and what the visit report is and is not.

Revise visit report design to recognize a school's strengths and accomplishments and the work currently underway to address important issues. Provide positive findings first.

Re-evaluate report language concerning differences between achievement scores of special education students and regular education students.

Provide a copy of the report to the principal prior to the reading so that he/she can more adroitly guide the processing of the report by the faculty.

Incorporate into the public reading of the visit report to the school some time for questions and feedback from the school to clarify and better understand the insights of the visit team.

Clearly communicate changes in RIDE policies to schools and districts in a timely fashion.

### **School Improvement Planning**

Streamline the action planning process.

### **Support and Intervention**

Review impact of state testing schedule on schools and redesign to consume less instructional time.

Shorten the time lapse between the visit and the development of the School Compact, and clarify responsibilities for making the compact happen. Identify follow-up accountability activities with specific dates for assessing commitments of all parties to the compact.

Specify user-friendly resources available for schools on topics frequently noted as areas of need by visit teams.

Ensure regular Field Service support and communication to the school including ongoing reminders about next steps in the SALT process.

## Source of Evidence Document # 3.3:

### SCHOOL PRINCIPALS' PERCEPTIONS

#### Introduction

Marilyn Crocker prepared this analysis from her and Ann Abeille's observations of a meeting on May 14, 2001, called by Rhode Island Association of School Principals (RIASP) to discuss with RIDE staff a number of concerns that some principals had expressed regarding SALT visit reports. RIDE was represented at the meeting by the six-member Little SALT leadership Team.

The memo is ordered by two of the questions that RIDE defined based on RIASP pre-meeting discussions. RIDE raised the concerns and facilitated an open discussion by the approximately 30 principals present.

This memo presents the researchers' considered perceptions of the principal's perceptions based on their comments during the session. It does not include RIDE presentations of information related to the two central questions or their responses to follow-up questions raised by the principals.

#### **Do SALT reports pick on school principals unfairly?**

**Since there are more teachers on visiting teams than other constituents, are team findings biased?**

Principals' perceptions are mixed regarding the question of bias against principals present in SALT reports' findings.

Many principals saw the SALT report as a balanced and fair assessment of the school. Among these principals, many had served on visits. Some said that before serving on a team they were influenced by hearsay and questioned the fairness of the process but had changed their impression after being part of the team findings-building process.

Generally speaking, principals who actively engage in self study activities with their staff members and use evidence to develop findings about their own school prior to that school's SALT visit, find that the school-generated findings are relatively congruent with the findings developed by the visiting team.

The following elements contribute to these principals' perceptions that report findings are fair and balanced:

- ◆ The inclusion of school administrators as members of the visit team. These persons can represent the administrative position and viewpoint during team discussions and contribute to balance in findings.

- ◆ The evidence-rich, consensus methodology employed by the team in finding development
- ◆ The teams' practice of going back to verify and triangulate evidence (especially when data is questioned by any member of the team) in order to establish veracity before using it to inform a finding.
- ◆ The team's extensive dialogue and care in choosing words as it is formulating the report.

However, other principals believe findings are not bias-free and are skewed against principals. They saw the following issues as contributing to this bias:

- How a team conducts the visit:
  1. "Tunnel vision" on the part of some team members. When a team member comes with a preconceived focus, or is "looking for" something, the larger picture of the school is obscured.
  2. Undue attention given by the visiting team to "complaints" registered by teachers at the school being visited.
  3. Limited sampling of members of the school community by the visiting team with an emphasis on teachers.
- ◆ Make-up of Team:
  1. Insufficient administrator representation on a visit team, especially in the case of large schools.
  2. Use of assistant principal (rather than principal) to represent school administrative perspective.
  3. Inconsistent make-up of teams, for example in post secondary and parent/community representatives.
- ◆ Larger context of events:
  1. Insensitivity to the school's history in RIDE scheduling the visit, including the perceived unfair assumption that a school experiencing an administrative change right before the SALT visit should not postpone its visit to a later time
  2. Perceived expectations of team member that classrooms in October should be engaged in advanced activities more appropriate later in the year after basic foundations have been established

**What are issues the principals would like to explore more fully in future feedback sessions?**

Principals raised these questions at the end of the session:

How can the opportunity for dialogue between SALT visit team and the school community be increased, especially around the visit report?

What specific language in the visit reports creates a tone perceived by some schools as “negative” and “degrading”?

To what extent does flawed data recording by schools result in skewed, and ultimately meaningless interpretations of equity gaps?

How can the SALT process, especially the SALT Visit, be informed by the literature of organizational change so that it more fully supports the change process in schools?

## Source of Evidence Document # 3.4

### DISTRICT ADMINISTRATORS' PERCEPTIONS\*

#### Introduction

Ann Abeille prepared this report based on observations that she and Marilyn Crocker made of a focus group meeting they conducted with representatives from the district offices of the schools that were included in the study of school perceptions. The analysis from that activity is reported in Source of Evidence Document # 3.1. The questions are those that were used for Document 3.1. This meeting is described in Step #\_\_ in the Description of Source of Evidence # 3.

This report focuses solely on district administrators' perceptions, since they were identified as a critical constituency for SALT. While some of the perceptions recounted in this memo were included in the evidence for Document 4.1, others go beyond that document.

The membership of that group was eight representatives from the three districts (Pawtucket, Warwick, and Cranston) that participated in the focus group. These included two superintendents and other central administrators such as assistant superintendents.

#### **Is self-study helping our schools better understand the learning and teaching of their students?**

District administrators thought that schools are managing the SALT process more effectively now than two years ago. Along with more guidance available from RIDE, schools now are starting to learn from each other.

#### **Is the school visit generating useful knowledge to help schools better understand how to improve learning and teaching?**

These district administrators agreed that the school visits and reports are lacking in the following ways:

- ◆ The lack of a clear set of rubrics that would clarify expectations for the visits;
- ◆ The avoidance by teams of findings and recommendations regarding the implications of the local teachers contract;
- ◆ Many useless repetitions of interviews of district administrators (conducted for each school that hosts a SALT visit);

- ◆ Poor training of team members in questioning techniques; and
- ◆ Lack of opportunity to change reports, even for inaccuracies.

**Is school improvement planning helping our schools take effective action?**

These district administrators believed that, school improvement planning in schools is to a great extent fragmented in nature. School people do not operate with a clear model for such planning and struggle with efforts to make the transition from school-based teams that preceded SALT to the mandated school improvement teams. There is great confusion about how to do this and how to relate all the other teams and task groups to the SIT and SIP.

They see that RIDE sends a mixed message about the district role and responsibilities that confuses both school and district personnel. Clarity is needed in terms of whether it is the district plan that drives or guides the school plans or the reverse. District administrators are frustrated with SALT reports include impractical recommendations for district support for such things as professional development in schools that cannot be covered in the limitations of district budgets.

**Is school report night helping the school generate understanding about SALT among its families and community?**

No additional observations in this section.

**Have the districts and RIDE been effective in supporting the improvement efforts of schools?**

The district representative made the following points:

- ◆ Some districts have a supportive Field Service Team relationship that teachers do not know about since the team is only involved with a leadership core.
- ◆ The Compact is problematic, especially for districts with greater numbers of schools that are expected to provide additional funding for each school based on SALT report recommendations, and yet have a fixed amount of Article 31 money. Unrealistic expectations are set up in the schools that cannot always be met by district funds. District administrators believe there is need for district support, but with the understanding that compacts should be written that are in line with realistic budget parameters. Messages from RIDE concerning this are considered to be inconsistent--on the one hand

- encouraging site-based reform, but on the other hand, expecting the district to pay for all changes.
- ◆ District administrators want more guidance on what their role should be with schools and SALT. They want to guide the schools in reflecting during the whole SALT process, and especially following the visit and the report. They believe it is important for districts to be part of the reading of the report, to support how the school processes the report and to give principals permission to respond.
  - ◆ District administrators believe that school accountability is important. They want more clarity about who, in the grand scheme of SALT, will indeed hold the schools accountable for changes.

**What are the conditions in a school that allow it to take advantage of SALT?**

The district administrators think that it is critical that SALT be a positive experience for schools so that they don't take a defensive position that results in making excuses rather than making change.

**All in all how well is SALT working to improve learning in Rhode Island schools?**

Often because of the extreme pressures on principals, SALT has increased the level of collegiality among school administrators in general.

**What suggestions do district administrators offer for improvement of the SALT process?**

District administrators added the following recommendations:

- ◆ Provide videos to accompany SALT guides.
- ◆ Clarify and set a standard for what a district needs to provide to the visiting teams in terms of meals, copying services, and workspace.
- ◆ Clarify how district administrators can be more involved throughout the SALT process.
- ◆ Avoid the "funeral meeting" at the end of the SALT visit.
- ◆ Create a mechanism for central administrators to do self-study among themselves.
- ◆ Provide state forums for district administrators to discuss the SALT process.

## Source of Evidence Document # 3.5:

### PERCEPTIONS OF MEMBERS OF RIDE FIELD SERVICE TEAMS

#### Introduction

Marilyn Crocker prepared this report. It is based on feedback from members of RIDE Field Service Teams collected on two separate occasions. The first was observation by Marilyn and Ann Abeille of a focus group meeting they conducted with Field Service representatives on February 27<sup>th</sup>. That discussion contributed to *Source of Evidence Document # 3.1*. The questions are those used for Document 3.1. The second was observation by Marilyn Crocker of the Northern Field Service team retreat that she facilitated on June 20<sup>th</sup>. The input generated during the retreat and summarized in the proceedings document from that meeting is built into the sections of this report.

This report focuses solely on field service team members' perceptions, since they were identified as a critical constituency for SALT. While some of the perceptions recounted in this report were included in the evidence for Document 3.1, most go beyond that document in scope and specificity.

#### **Is self-study helping our schools better understand the learning and teaching of their students?**

Field Service Team members thought that with some exceptions, most schools are currently limited in their use of self-study as an ongoing information-generating process for school improvement planning and action. They saw the following explanations for this limited use:

- ◆ School personnel's perception that self study is a way of getting ready for a SALT visit rather than a means of ongoing inquiry, analysis and finding-building to inform action
- ◆ Inconsistent leadership by school principals in supporting the planning and implementation of the self study with time, professional guidance and representative personnel
- ◆ Limited teacher experience with the process required for formulating a quality self study, and reluctance on the part of teachers to move from the familiar arena of making decisions about students to the larger arena of making decisions that impact the whole school

- ◆ The fragmented nature of the self study process itself that is manifest in its many tools, but no framework to relate separate items of evidence of how a school and its students are performing into a coherent picture.
- ◆ Insufficiently refined field service interventions to address the widely varying levels of organizational development and range of professional sophistication represented in RI schools and educators

**Is the school visit generating useful knowledge to help schools better understand how to improve learning and teaching?**

Team members thought that although visit reports generate useful knowledge to help schools improve practice in some areas, visiting team members frequently lack the expertise to understand a school that is set in socio-economic or geographical context different from their own. Thus they tend to look for what they have experienced in their own school and often miss the uniqueness of the school and its unique needs. Visit reports are inconsistent in depth and emphasis, and reflect the lack of clear criteria for observing and assessing student learning. High school faculties often struggle with the SALT report in part because they are accustomed to reports considering inputs and capacities (for NEASC) rather than inquiring into student learning.

**Is school improvement planning helping our schools take effective action?**

Team members saw that schools face two different challenges with respect to school improvement planning.

The first is related to School Improvement Team effectiveness and includes the following issues:

- ◆ The difficulty of constructing a diverse team of school and community members who are committed to the work of school improvement
- ◆ The priority placed by the district on building and supporting a strong, effective SIT varies widely across the state
- ◆ The size of a school that can facilitate or hinder team formation and functioning.

The second is related to the planning process and includes the following issues:

- ◆ School personnel are accustomed to finding immediate solutions to problems rather than engaging in extensive data gathering, analysis, finding building and recommendation development

- ◆ Schools have not yet embraced the mantra “one school, one team, one plan” and so fall into fragmented or overlapping and duplicative efforts
- ◆ Schools lack examples of well-constructed plans, models for gaining faculty buy-in, systems for monitoring implementation and conducting mid-course evaluation/refocusing.

**Is school report night helping the school generate understanding about SALT among its families and community?**

Team members thought that some schools beneficially use the annual or twice yearly open house to begin to inform parents about information works data, the process of self-study and school improvement planning, and standards driven curriculum and instruction. They thought it is difficult to generate understanding about these complex concepts in a two-hour meeting that occurs once or possibly twice a year. Furthermore, an effort to educate families about SALT using *Information Works!* data tends to generalize progress to the school level, when parents are more interested in their own child’s individual progress.

**Have the districts and RIDE been effective in supporting the improvement efforts of schools?**

Team members believe that RIDE has not been able to commit itself fully to supporting the SALT process and the improvement efforts of schools. Contributing to this is RIDE lack of capacity – insufficient numbers of personnel, limited expertise in needed support areas, and the will on the part of all staff to fully engage in SALT. They find that supporting the full SALT process (self study, school improvement planning, compact development, Article 31, etc.) requires a great deal of time, and is not taken into consideration fully in the overall scheduling of SALT activities.

Team members saw instances when RIDE personnel have supported both schools and districts extensively and effectively, and with sensitivity to and respect for the local situation. This has occurred when the entire team has chosen to work together in making a concerted effort to serve as supportive consultants and problem-solvers with a targeted number of schools from the point of developing the school self study, through the writing and/or updating of the school improvement plan, to the development of the school compact. Nevertheless, some teams have experienced districts refusing consultative assistance when it has been offered. This is due, in part, to districts’ perceptions that other issues and obstacles are priorities.

District participation in SALT through the school compact has been compromised because the form, process and function of the school compact has undergone constant change and the financial commitments of RIDE and the district have not been defined clearly and consistently. Field service team members further saw as impediments to compact development the lack of common criteria for compacts and the lack of common understanding on the part of schools and districts that the compact is part of a punctuated learning/feedback system, and serves as an investment strategy, not as an annual report.

**What are the conditions in a school that allow it to take advantage of SALT?**

Team members thought that schools take advantage of SALT when they see that SALT is the framework for all school improvement efforts. This coherence has been missing as RIDE has operated “like Nieman-Marcus, offering the program of the year,” rather than encouraging schools only to take on initiatives that work to advance the agreed-upon student learning priorities.

**All in all, how well is SALT working to improve learning in RI schools?**

They see indications that special education and regular education still work as two systems in RI schools, and that SALT sometimes reinforces that separation, to the detriment of improving learning for all children. This is an unintended consequence of scheduling SALT and special education school support visits separately and not coherently relating feedback from each. On one occasion a special education school support visit occurred simultaneously with the SALT visit and allowed for creative alignment of the school’s improvement efforts, presumably to the benefit of all students.

**What suggestions do Field Service members offer for improvement of the SALT process?**

***Self Study***

- ◆ Have the schools develop a case history to lend coherence to the various indicators of school performance
- ◆ Develop a diagnostic piece so field service support can respond to the unique culture of an individual school and tailor interventions to the school’s specific developmental needs – rather than using the same set of guides for all schools

**Shorten the School Survey and provide guidance to schools on how to use it as a source of information for strategic planning.**

***Visit***

- ◆ Develop a set of standards, indicators or criteria that refine the abilities of schools and visiting teams to observe and assess student learning and make recommendations
- ◆ Strengthen visit team training, especially in terms of providing visitors with capacity to more accurately gather evidence about student learning and the school as a community (e.g. what are we looking for and how do we know when we find it.)
- ◆ Redesign the report presentation to the school. Make it a reflective piece based on a clear protocol. Eliminate the oral delivery of the report.
- ◆ Re-examine the entire visit process and build in greater “give and take,” allow it to be a critical friend process.
- ◆ Consider fielding one or a small number of teams that conduct the visits to allow for greater consistency.

***School Improvement***

- ◆ Spotlight schools that are doing an exemplary job in forming a team, developing a plan (based on self-study and informed by the SALT visit) and implementing action effectively.
- ◆ Instigate intentional reflection on the school improvement component including questions like “What worked? What didn’t work? Why? What would we do differently in the future? What have we learned?”
- ◆ Work to reframe leadership away from “someone who tells me what to do” and toward a team that inquires, reflects, plans, guides action.

***School Report Night***

- ◆ Assist schools with techniques for manipulating and displaying data in forms that are understandable to non-educators.
- ◆ Reposition the parent and community communication piece as continuous information-sharing opportunities rather than a one-time effort.

***School Support***

- ◆ Clarify compact. Specify in advance what resources the district and state will make available. Establish who needs to be at the table to ensure support of the school.
- ◆ Create department-wide commitment to school accountability for learning and teaching
- ◆ Connect all RIDE initiated improvement initiatives to school improvement plan priorities and targets.
- ◆ Support the redesigning of school time.
- ◆ Help schools build and implement a schedule and procedures for ongoing, systematic self-study, planning, implementation, evaluation, and mid-course and annual revision. Help them to see the incorporation of the visit report and the school compact as part of this overall system of school improvement.

## Source Of Evidence Document # 3.6

### PERCEPTIONS OF MEMBERS OF LITTLE SALT LEADERSHIP TEAM

#### Introduction

Marilyn Crocker prepared this analysis from observations that she made of a focus group meeting that she conducted with the Little SALT leadership Team on May 22nd. The questions are those that were used for Document 3.1.

This analysis focuses solely on Little SALT leadership Team members' perceptions, since they were identified as a critical constituency for SALT.

#### **Is self-study helping our schools to better understand the learning and teaching of their students?**

Little SALT strongly thought that the SALT self-study has a great potential for influencing the quality of learning and teaching. However, they thought self-study was underdeveloped as a process of information gathering and reflection, and was under-supported by RIDE. They thought that most schools see self-study as too closely linked to other components of SALT (a required step in preparation for a visit, or a first step in completing a School Improvement Plan) and miss that self study in SALT is intended to be used on a continuous basis as a means for understanding how students are learning.

In general schools receive little feedback on their self-study efforts, and their work tends to reflect a high level of generality. Although one or two schools have begun to experiment with writing findings as part of the self-study process, this is not specifically suggested in current support given to schools by RIDE. Although Little SALT said it is a priority for to work with schools hosting a SALT visit, the time available for field service teams to work with schools on self-study has lessened because of a new emphasis on completing the school compact. They thought support to schools was also affected by the loss of school-based personnel due to downsizing and retirements at RIDE and by a "deterioration of will" within the department to do field service.

#### **Is the school visit generating useful knowledge to help schools better understand how to improve learning and teaching?**

Little SALT saw several important refinements over the past year that they think has resulted in the school visit generating more useful knowledge to help schools improve learning and teaching. These include:

- 1) developing a written protocol for the Visit;
- 2) emphasizing the nested nature of the focus areas with student learning at the heart;
- 3) focusing evidence gathering by the team on student learning, including what students think about their own learning and how they construct knowledge; and
- 4) strengthening the power and richness of findings in the visit report.

However, a number of important questions need to be resolved in order to make the visit and the visit report even more helpful to schools. These questions include:

- ◆ How can institutionalizing the visit be done without losing its freshness and vitality?
- ◆ How many visits should be conducted in one year?
- ◆ What is adequate follow-up and how can it be provided?
- ◆ How can school personnel become engaged more fully with the visiting team as interactive participants in the visit process?
- ◆ How can the tone and substance of the report be fine-tuned to make the report a more useful document for the school?
- ◆ How can we learn more about how visited schools experience the school visit and the long-term impact of the school's report?

### **Is school improvement planning helping our schools take effective action?**

Although it is now widely accepted by every school in RI that it must have a school improvement team, there is great variation from school to school in team composition; operation; leadership; capacity; authority; and available support. Teams generally appear to work most effectively when schools provide settings that promote collegiality and time for back-and-forth communication that allows teachers, administrators and community members to create new knowledge about student learning, teaching and the school. Often, but not always, the principal can model this process and lead in it becoming common practice.

Although schools say they use the available SALT guides for creating a SIT and a SIP, at this time most do not form plans that are useful and focused, or use the SALT visit recommendations to inform action plan revisions.

**Is school report night helping the school generate understanding about SALT among its families and community?**

Some schools have made strong and successful efforts to present information to parents and community members through school and team events as well as student led conferencing, but these models are not yet widely shared. Three-quarters of the schools share state assessment results and other information works data at the fall open house. However, the school report night as a one-time event has neither generated good understanding about school accountability for student learning and teaching, nor effective engagement of the public in the accountability process. Many schools still struggle with how to communicate complex concepts simply and in multiple languages.

**Have the districts and RIDE been effective in supporting the improvement efforts of schools?**

The compact is the point at which districts and RIDE can specify support for the improvement of a particular school, but both RIDE and districts have been reluctant to come to the compact table. Many district leaders maintain a traditional control of their own schools and are uncomfortable with a more “contextualized” system of shared responsibilities and mutual accountability. Others give lip service to the process but do not fully understand the relationship of SALT to school improvement. Both districts and RIDE experience personnel shortages that contribute to delays, miscommunication and information gaps affecting all parties.

The issue of monetary support is a delicate one for both the state and the district, with the district experiencing itself “hit upon” by multiple schools for additional dollars and the state initially promising resources, and more recently stating that it cannot support the compact with incremental funds. Although the compact is intended to formalize partnership commitment to support critical school based action that has been informed by the recommendations of the visit team, the compact has received less attention than the visit report by the school, district and RIDE.

SALT fellows support school improvement efforts in their role as visit chairs, and work with the principal advisor to SALT to contribute importantly to the ongoing refinement of the visit and the visit report. The fact that several fellows have served for more than one year has provided stability and continuity to the visit process. At the same time it has allowed for individual capacity building. New questions posed by the longevity of SALT fellows include:

- ◆ What will be the induction process for new fellows after next year?
- ◆ How can fellows effectively teach the SALT methodology to teams so that teams can increasingly focus on student learning?
- ◆ What roles can third year fellows assume in addition to chairing visits?

### **Recommendations of Little SALT:**

#### ***Self study***

- ◆ Revise guidance given to schools to more strongly suggest that they write findings based on the evidence they have gathered.
- ◆ Give feedback to schools on the quality of their self-study – both process and product.
- ◆ Work to align NEASC (as it is used in high schools) and SALT in terms of both the use of standards and the practice of finding writing.

#### ***Visit***

- ◆ Develop tools to deepen visit teams' ability to focus on student learning piece.
- ◆ Conduct text-based feedback sessions with schools to learn what specifically in the SALT reports creates the perception of “negative tone.”
- ◆ Experiment with new roles for experienced SALT fellows.
- ◆ Develop ways for SALT fellows to teach the SALT methodology to the visit team quickly and well so that the team can use it more powerfully.

#### ***School Improvement Teams and School Improvement Planning***

- ◆ Continue efforts to set the context for SITs in terms of leading the school in its accountability for student learning (understood as students responsible for their learning, teachers responsible for supporting students in their learning, schools responsible for supporting teachers and students etc.)
- ◆ Revise school improvement planning guides to incorporate both the visit report as a planning input and the compact as a commitment to action priorities.

- ◆ Promote the use of field guides for forming actionable plans.

### ***Support***

- ◆ Clarify the role of field service in supporting the SALT cycle.
- ◆ Work to increase superintendents' commitment to SALT through one-on-one communication efforts by RIDE and as well as through peer contact.
- ◆ Continue to work on how school and districts can work as partners in developing school compacts.
- ◆ Review compact documents and provide feedback.
- ◆ Encourage Commissioner to speak more frequently to RIDE, especially Field Service Teams, about the purpose and direction of SALT and the importance of department-wide buy-in

### ***School Report Night***

- ◆ Continue to gather and disseminate on the RIDE website examples of how schools are connecting with parents and community to shape understanding of SALT efforts and build broad support.
- ◆ Consider changing the name of this SALT element to suggest ongoing communication rather than once a year.

### ***SALT 360***

- ◆ Do additional case studies
- ◆ Learn how good leaders have used the SALT report
- ◆ Deepen investigation into what impact report had on schools
- ◆ Study what is the sustained impact on the individual who has been out on a visit
- ◆ Communicate the impact of SALT to the wider internal RIDE audience and use feedback sessions to explore how SALT can become the RIDE accountability system, not just a program of RIDE

## Source of Evidence Document # 3.7

### SALT FELLOWS PERCEPTIONS

#### Introduction

Ann Abeille and Marilyn Crocker conducted a two-hour focus group discussion on May 2001. Five of the six SALT fellows participated. They had chaired between nine and 24 SALT visits each, for a total of 72 visits.

Ann prepared this report.

#### **What are the most important purposes of the school visit in the grand scheme of SALT?**

SALT fellows see the following as the most important purposes of the school visit:

- ◆ To provide the school with a report that reflects a clear picture of student learning in action in the school and gives the school the most important information (analytical and diagnostic) that is needed for improvement.
- ◆ To serve as a catalyst for change and to spark needed discussion in schools and districts about improvements needed for students.
- ◆ To model the inquiry process and building of findings based on inquiry for educators within the school.
- ◆ To provide significant professional growth opportunities for teachers on the team, including opportunities to:
  - Participate in inquiry process;
  - Gather, analyze, and discuss data;
  - Articulate professional judgment; and
  - Reflect on classroom practices with peers.

#### **What are the most important roles of the team Chair?**

The chair guides the process of inquiry, emphasizing the building of evidence from multiple perspectives, and facilitating reflective conversations about practice. The chair facilitates the group's work so that all participants' voices are heard and valued.

#### **Is the composition and preparation of the visiting teams appropriate?**

Experiences with team members are more positive than negative and there is agreement among chairs about the challenges:

- ◆ Some team members do not demonstrate excellent judgment in their interaction with school personnel, occasionally committing serious breaks in protocol.
- ◆ In certain regions of the state, some teachers have demonstrated competitive attitudes, including resentment of resources provided to the schools being visited.
- ◆ Some team members come to the visit with their own biases and agendas, but generally these can be dispelled through the team discussions.
- ◆ Principals on teams are perceived as often reluctant to criticize school leadership, sometimes leading to weaker findings in the reports, although chairs find that the reports have gradually become more focused on educational leadership.
- ◆ More (at least two per team) and better trained parents are needed on visiting teams. Parents need more preparation in standards-based learning and educational vocabulary. The most effective parents have been prepared as teachers or have spent time on a school improvement team. Parents without this background and parents who have limited English skills are less able to contribute to (and sometimes detract from) team activities and deliberations. Chairs suggest that RIDE needs to examine further the needed contributions from parents and that parents need to be selected from a broader range of communities and would perhaps benefit from separate training and materials.

**How prepared are schools for the visit? How thorough have been the self-studies? How broadly have teachers been engaged in or informed of self-studies?**

There is a broad continuum in terms of the depth of the school self-studies, as well as the breadth of involvement of school personnel in either conducting the self-study or at least learning of the findings. The schools that are best prepared for the visit are the ones that have conducted a strong self-study involving much of the faculty as well as ones in which many faculty members have served on a visiting team. Weak self-studies are sometimes linked with:

- ◆ lack of relaying of training information to the school, ineffective school improvement teams
- ◆ lack of shared leadership in the school
- ◆ lack of use of the self-study guide.

Some schools and districts openly devalue the SALT process, including the self-study. Many schools still involve only 15-20% of faculty in self-study work. Schools with solid self-studies find few surprises in the SALT reports, whereas, in schools where there is less self-study there is more dissonance with the visiting team's report.

**How are the SALT reports written (consensus building, choice of focus areas, choice of wording)?**

Usually the focus areas for the report are decided on the first day and narrowed down to the most important issues for the school to address. Consensus building is always challenging. Teams work hard together to agree on the tone and the wording of the report. Efforts are made to reflect the positive as well as the negative, providing a report that is fair, balanced, and accurate. The writing work is intense and based on huge amounts of data. Occasionally there is the sense that the report findings are watered down because of the consensus process of the team.

**What is the value of the current method of reading the report to the faculty? What are the challenges?**

The report is read aloud to the whole faculty so that everyone hears the same thing at the same time. Chairs question whether this is actually true, given different learning styles of individuals. The reading is a difficult and emotional experience for both the chair doing the reading and for the faculty and administrators listening. The audience is perceived as not ready to have a dialogue about the report at that time and chairs believe that processing the report takes considerable careful reading. Chairs agree that they should not be put in the position of defending a report, but that schools should receive support from other SALT fellows to process the report with a broad base of school faculty.

**To what extent and in what ways does RIDE support SALT fellows?**

SALT fellows enjoy their work and feel validated and supported as educators, and have developed enormous knowledge and expertise from their many visits to schools across the state. They have received a great deal of training and ongoing support for this work from RIDE and their coach. Communication with RIDE staff is, however, somewhat problematic, with fellows indicating lack of opportunity to share their learning from visits as well as instances of unstated assumptions made by RIDE staff.

Together, this group of educators on loan to RIDE make up a valuable source of learning about RI schools that is not being tapped for the development of a broad spectrum of RIDE staff.

## SOURCE OF EVIDENCE # 4 ANALYSIS OF SALT VISIT REPORTS

### Overview

Since the visit is based on a methodology of inquiry, the value and soundness of its results in information and knowledge becomes the single most important source of evidence for judging how well the methodology works, and in what ways its design and implementation can be strengthened. Basing changes on the results produced is considerably more reliable than basing them on perceptions of schools or others who do not consider or understand that the visit is based on a methodology.

It must be remembered that the visit is part of an accountability system that combines accountability and support. Since the visit conclusions must do both, it must use the rigor of a methodology to ensure that its conclusions are legitimate.

The only “product” of the visit is the team report, which is deliberately written by the team in accord with the methodology.

Catalpa Ltd. completed two informal reports on the visit reports after the first and second year of visits. While these had value at the time they were written, they were limited because of the complexity of organizing textual information for rigorous analysis.

For phase one, Catalpa planned to begin utilizing computer textual analysis programs and to complete one or more preliminary analyses to see their value.

### STEPS

1. Tom Wilson sought advice from several experts in the use of software for textual analysis and evaluated the two most advanced packages for the best fit with the SALT visit report analysis. *Atlas-ti* was chosen.
2. Andrea Castaneda and Mary Jo Foley worked to compile a full set of files for the 123 reports. When the file was complete, Andrea did the necessary file modifications and entered them into *Atlas-ti*.
3. In the early spring, a number of principals raised the issues that visit reports tended to criticize principals harshly. When about 100 reports were in the database, Tom Wilson conducted a preliminary analysis and wrote a preliminary technical report.

4. All 123 reports were then prepared for analysis. The coding scheme and analysis procedures were refined. The final report resulting from this final analysis is *Source of Evidence Document # 4.1*. It shows only small differences from the preliminary report.
5. Coding schemes and questions have been framed for reports on how visit reports portray districts and on what visit reports show regarding how teams use standards and rubrics in their analysis.

### **LIMITATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR PHASE II**

The early development work is complete. The first report indicates the considerable potential of this type of analysis to:

Address how reports do address issues. The perceived importance of the reports appears to have greatly increased and teams work hard to say what they think is important, which is not always what schools want to hear. Text analysis provides an accepted way to check out what it is that teams across the state are saying.

It also has potential for raising the cross-school issues that teams see as important for schools to improve.

It also has potential for checking the methodology and the conduct of the visit, which can be valuable for the continual review of reports and for strengthening the methodology, the ongoing professional development of visit chairs, and the training of teams.

## Source of Evidence Document # 4.1:

### WHAT SALT VISIT REPORTS CONCLUDE ABOUT THE QUALITY OF SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

#### Introduction

Thomas A. Wilson prepared this report based on his analysis of the results from a sophisticated computer program for text analysis (*Atlas-Ti*). Andrea Castaneda and Mary Jo Foley provided assistance in the coding of the text.

This document is a revision of the May 11, 2001 Catalpa Technical Memo on this same subject prepared for a meeting of the Rhode Island Association of School Principals (RIASP). The analysis reported here is based on all 123 SALT visit reports completed through May 2001 and is presented in final form.

#### Substantive Results

This textual analysis was done to ascertain what SALT visit reports say about the quality of school leadership in the schools visited.

It is based on 123 SALT visit team reports compiled over the four academic years May 21, 1997 to May 31, 2001.

Central findings are:

- 121 SALT reports refer to school leadership in some way. Twenty-five reports (20.7%) describe the principal's leadership in simple, descriptive terms and make no judgments about the quality of that leadership. Ninety-six reports (79.3%) comment on the quality of leadership. (See Notes 1 and 2 in *Notes on Interesting Issues* for explanation.)
- In the 96 schools where the visit team made a judgment about the quality of the school leadership, the view of the team can be easily assigned to one of these three categories:

The leadership in the school fully supports good teaching and learning. 69 reports (71.9%).

The leadership in the school shows mixed levels of supportiveness for good teaching and learning. 11 reports (11.5%)

The leadership in the school does not support good teaching and learning. 16 reports (16.7%)

Only one report in seven of all the reports clearly cites school leadership as unsupportive. When teams make statements about the quality of school's leadership, they clearly cite supportive leadership in four reports for every report they cite unsupportive leadership. Visit teams cite supportive and mixed levels of supportive leadership five times more often than unsupportive school leadership.

### Notes on analysis

1. The analysis process behind the results reported above included these steps:
  - A judgment was made about which of the following categories best described that team's view of the leadership in the school: no mention of leadership; a simple descriptive mention of leadership; a view that the school's leadership was supportive of good learning and teaching; a view that the school's leadership was unsupportive of good learning and teaching, or the view that the school's leadership was mixed in its support of good learning and teaching.
  - In order to make these decisions, all 123 of the SALT visit reports for the last four years were entered into the computer text analysis program, *Atlas-Ti*. Each report was searched for occurrences of the words: "principal(s)," "administrat(ion, ive, or, ors)" and "leader(s, ship)."
  - All conclusions (and other report paragraphs) containing these words were assembled from each report and analyzed. If the correct category was not clear from these selections, the whole report was analyzed.
2. The accuracy of this analysis is high, having been verified using applicable criteria for this type of analysis.

### Notes about Interesting Issues

1. Teams are not expected to write a conclusion about the quality of school or principal's leadership as a pre-defined part of the report. Teams are required to address what they think are **the most important issues** for that school to consider for its improvement. The team's choice is forced by the limited number of conclusions (three to seven) they can write in each focus area (Student Learning, Teaching and the School).

Thus, if a team chooses to write about the leadership of the school or the principal, it is accurate to interpret that the quality of that principal's leadership has emerged as an important issue.

One of the criteria the team uses to form a conclusion is usefulness to the school. Thus, the team chooses issues and language that it judges will be most useful in promoting the improvement of teaching and learning in that school. Usefulness is not interpreted as meaning the conclusion should be "positive" in tone. Rather it must generate consensus on the team that the conclusion is accurate and fair.

2. Just as teams write conclusions about issues that are generally viewed as the professional responsibility of teachers (e.g. quality of classroom instruction), they also write conclusions about issues that are generally seen as the professional responsibility of the principal (e.g. communication in the school, delivering of

professional development, school-wide expectations for student performance). Thus, all reports contain conclusions about issues of importance to a principal, even if the quality of principal leadership is not directly discussed.

### Examples

The following quotes from selected visit reports are intended to support the points of this memo.

#### **An example of a descriptive reference to principal leadership. (Not included in figures on quality of leadership. 25 reports or 20.7%.)**

One principal and one assistant principal administer the school.

#### **References that were judged to be examples of “Leadership that fully supports good teaching and learning (69 reports or 71.9%)”**

The new principal has established herself as a positive force within the school. She is welcoming, supportive, and innovative. Parents, teachers and children note that she has good people skills and has established positive relationships with the educational community. She has the skills and the vision to move the school toward achieving its goals. (observations of the school, parent, teacher, staff and student interviews)

The principal of \_\_\_\_\_ School has led the school's dramatic transformation in response to the 1996 NEASC report. He has been instrumental in creating a climate of courtesy and respect, cooperation and pride. He has recognized the extent to which the community, teachers, and students were ready for change, and has taken several steps that have begun to move this school forward. With his administrative team and teacher leaders, he has introduced programs and initiatives to improve student achievement and recognizes that reform at \_\_\_\_\_ School is a work in progress.

[\_\_\_\_ School's principal] makes the most of the severely limited financial resources available by focusing on the needs of his teachers and students. His genuine interest in his teachers' and students' lives and families fosters the close, personal atmosphere that exists in this school. This is evidenced in the halls, classrooms and cafeteria when he speaks to students and addresses each of them by name. His confidence in his teachers empowers them. Many have taken on leadership roles and responsibilities that have increased the staff's capacity and strengthened the network of expertise in this school. All of these factors result in a learning community where each and every member is respected and valued. (Observations made in the school, conversations and interviews with teachers and staff, scheduled meetings with students, parents, School Improvement Team, district and building administrators, 1999-2000 SALT Survey report)

The principal at \_\_\_\_\_ School uses effective leadership skills to motivate, inspire, and support the entire school community. He has a clear vision for the future and knows where he wants to lead \_\_\_\_ School. In so doing, he forms alliances within and beyond the school and cultivates the strengths of all partners in order to benefit students. (school and classroom observations, meetings with students, parents, district administrators, and \_\_\_\_ School Improvement Team, conversations with staff and teachers, SALT Survey 2000)

### **References that were judged to examples of “Leadership that does not support good teaching and learning” (16 reports or 16.7%)**

The building principal also demonstrates a lack of respect and support for members of this faculty who do not share his personal and professional philosophies. His leadership style has resulted in a sense of frustration, isolation, and a general lack of honest communication in this school. All of these factors contribute to a school climate and atmosphere of distrust and uncertainty. (Scheduled meetings with the district and school administrators, observations in the school, conversations and interviews with teachers students, and school administrator, review of the \_\_\_\_\_ School Department's \_\_\_\_\_ curriculum document)

While teachers, the principal, and the superintendent all have their own plans for how this school should function, no one has sat down to communally share those ideas nor to discuss how to implement effective school change so that all \_\_\_\_\_ School students can become actively engaged in their learning.

The low expectations of district and school administrators, faculty and students about what students can accomplish, contribute to the lack of a rigorous curriculum, low performance, chronic absenteeism, tardiness and high drop out rate.

### **Other interesting quotes**

#### **A team writes about poor teacher leadership:**

Most teachers in this school feel empowered in making decisions of importance to them. Some teachers have initiated programs in the areas of technology and enrichment. A few teachers are the acknowledged leaders in the school. However, most teachers do not recognize the impact of extending that strength throughout the building to benefit their teaching and their students' learning. (conversations with teachers, meetings with building and district administrators, \_\_\_\_\_ Elementary Portfolio)

#### **A team pushes teachers to join with the principal:**

Now it is time to turn your attention to developing new ways to help your children attain the high standards that will be needed for success in the 21st century. Do not be afraid to experiment with new methods and materials. Support each other in these efforts and share both successes and failures. Join your new principal and support her efforts to create a school where everyone is a learner and a teacher. Develop a media center that makes your library truly the heart of the building. Advocate for District change that will support the needs of all the children in \_\_\_\_\_.

#### **A team pushes for change at the District level:**

Use the energy of the school and community to advocate at the district level for positive changes that will ultimately benefit the \_\_\_\_\_ School community. These changes include the elimination of split classes, participation in curriculum development, adequate funding for materials and resources, and involvement in relevant professional development. Review the district strategic plan to ensure the School Improvement Plan is aligned with the district's goals. Then encourage full participation of the school community in the writing and implementation of the action plans for the tactics to achieve performance targets. With the multitude of talents exhibited in this building and the arrival of a new educational leader anything is possible for \_\_\_\_\_ School.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

### **Groups that contributed to this report**

Oakland Beach Elementary School, Warwick

Robert F. Kennedy School, Providence

Shea Senior High School, Pawtucket

Samuel Slater Junior High School, Pawtucket

Western Hills Middle School, Cranston

South Kingstown High School, Wakefield

Representatives of all four RIDE Field Service Teams

SALT leadership Team

RIDE Commissioners

SALT Fellows

RIASP

Members of SALT Visit Teams

### **Resumes of research team follow**

## ANN ABEILLE

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### SUMMARY OF RELATED EXPERIENCE

As Director of Research and Evaluation at Learning Innovations, Ann Abeille is committed to providing high quality research and evaluation services which: (1) build the capacity of educators and other stakeholders to use, interpret, and communicate data for accountability and project improvement purposes; (2) encourage professional and institutional reflection and learning; and (3) facilitate open communication and collaborative problem-solving among stakeholders. She designs and conducts studies using a variety of data gathering methods, including intensive site visits to schools and districts, documentation analysis, questionnaires, focus groups and interviews of various stakeholder groups, and focused classroom observations. She has over 25 years of experience designing and conducting needs assessments, evaluations, and research studies, and providing guidance to educators and business people in conducting research and evaluation. An expert in both qualitative and quantitative methods and in the design and application of focus groups and surveys, she has conducted major, system-wide assessments of the New York State System of over 120 Teacher Resource and Computer Training Centers and the status of teacher mentoring in the state of Rhode Island. She served as the principal investigator for a study of the use of statewide testing results by schools and districts in the state of Massachusetts funded by the Massachusetts Education Reform Review Commission (MERRC). She currently leads two other research studies supported by MERRC (one on teacher supply and demand, and one on leadership challenges in Massachusetts). She is a contributor to a WestEd led USDE sponsored study of conditions supporting Teacher Learning at the USDE recognized professional development Blue Ribbon Schools.

In the state of Rhode Island, Ann Abeille collaborates with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education on several statewide initiatives: 1) research on the School Accountability in Learning and Teaching (SALT) process; 2) collaborative design, development, and training services related to the I-Plan process of educator certification that is based on individual professional development plans and a wide variety of professional development strategies, 3) collaborative design of program approval standards for alternative certification programs for secondary teachers.

In the professional development arena, Ann Abeille develops and provides extensive professional learning opportunities for educators on all levels. She specializes in working with staff developers in designing, supporting, and evaluating effective job-embedded professional learning for teachers, such as collegial study groups, action research, and mentoring / peer coaching. In this

capacity she has worked closely with the regional networks of Teacher Center Directors throughout the state of New York.

In the technology area, Ann Abeille has conducted a national study of the use of middle and high school teachers' use of the World Wide Web in science and social studies as well as her ongoing studies of the technology professional development of New York State Teacher Centers. She serves as a partner staff member within the NorthEast and Islands Regional Technology in Education Consortium (NEIRTEC), one of the ten RTECs nationally, contributing through overall evaluation and professional development strategy consultation, as well as serving as liaison to the Virgin Islands. She also works with the SUNRAY project that is supporting teams from eight universities in the southeastern United States in their efforts to integrate technology into their teacher preparation programs. She is currently in the midst of a territory-wide (two district) evaluation study of technology integration in schools in the Virgin Islands that are implementing TLTC grants.

## **EDUCATION**

- 1975 M.Ed., Educational Research, Northeastern University, Boston, MA
- 1969 B.A., Major in French Language and Literature, minor in German. Teacher certification.

## **PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

- 1996– Present *Director*, Research and Evaluation, Learning Innovations at WestEd, Stoneham, MA
- Responsibilities include conducting internal evaluation of Learning Innovations professional development institutes and managing the provision of external evaluation services to a variety of clients including: Massachusetts Education Reform Review Commission (studies of school and district use of MCAS data, teacher supply and demand, and leadership challenges in Massachusetts); New York State System of Teacher Resource and Computer Training Centers; Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (research on School Accountability in Learning and Teaching (SALT) process, design and development related to I.Plan teacher certification process and alternative route to certification); Northeast Mathematics and Science Regional Alliance; Michigan Education Association (evaluation of teacher induction initiative); Virgin Islands Department of Education (technology integration study); COMAP (student achievement using mathematics textbook); and several NSF funded projects (Teachers as Learners: A Videotape Collection; Middle School Mentoring Project; North Country Science Mentoring Project). Other responsibilities include provision of professional development services in the area of job-embedded strategies and in developing evidence of impact of professional development efforts, as well as staff work for NEIRTEC and the SUNRAY project.

- 1993- *Staff Associate*, Evaluation and Evaluation Coordinator, Regional Laboratory for  
 1995 Educational Improvement of the Northeast and Islands, Andover, MA  
 Responsibilities included internal evaluation of Designing Schools for Enhanced Learning, a Laboratory program serving a network of 42 schools in the northeast states, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. Also provided external evaluation services for clients including: Dewitt-Wallace Library Power Project in Providence, Rhode Island; Executive Service Corps Leadership Program for Boston Public School Principals; Lynn, MA, Public Schools (Mentoring Program); Ludlow, MA, Public Schools (Mentoring Program); Massachusetts Eisenhower Project (Collaboration between Lesley College and Boston Public Schools); New England Association of Schools and Colleges (Commission on Secondary Education); New York City Teacher Centers Consortium; Project STEP Planning Grant - NSF Teacher Enhancement Project Central NH; Providence, RI Public Schools (Teacher Evaluation Program); Providence Blueprint for Education (Providence Public Schools Central Administration Reorganization Project, Student Voices Project) Rhode Island State Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (Field Service Teams).
- 1991- *Associate Director for Research*, Providence Blueprint for Education (PROBE),  
 1993 Public Education Fund, Providence, RI, An independent, community-based assessment of the Providence Public Schools.
- 1993 *Principal Investigator*, ESL Evaluation Project  
 East Providence Public Schools, East Providence, RI  
 English as a Second Language project supported by the Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.
- 1980- *Evaluator, Inservice Course Facilitator, Member of Project Management Team*,  
 1981 Teacher Corps Program, Northeastern University and District VII, Boston Public Schools, Boston, MA
- 1983- *Thesis Advisor and Instructor in Research Methods and Training and Development*
- 1999 *Evaluation*, School of Management, Lesley College, Cambridge, MA
- 1975- *Lecturer in Statistics, Research Design, Measurement and Evaluation*,  
 1994 Department of Education, Northeastern University, Boston, MA
- 1986- *Lecturer in Quantitative Analysis*, College of Business Administration  
 1991 Northeastern University, Boston, MA

## SELECTED PUBLICATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

- Abeille, A. (2001). *Best Practices and a Vision: Comprehensive Needs Assessment*.  
 Presentation for all city district superintendents, New York City Board of Education.  
 New York, NY.
- Abeille, A. (2001). *Designing Evaluation of Professional Development that Provides Evidence of Change in Teacher Practice and Improved Student Outcomes*.  
 Presentation and full-day work session with seven New York State Teacher Center networks in New York City, Rochester, Buffalo, Binghamton, Long Island, Old Forge, and Lower Hudson areas of NY.

- Abeille, A. (2001). *Planning Evaluation of Professional Development*. Presentation for state professional development providers in the Catalyst Program. Peoria, IL.
- Abeille, A. (2000). *Developing Effective Relationships with School Administrators in Support of Mentoring Programs for Beginning Teachers*. Presentation at the annual statewide conference of New York State Teacher Center Directors, White Plains, NY.
- Abeille, A. (2000). *Supporting Beginning Teachers*. Three-day training institute for school and district administrators. Worcester, MA.
- Abeille, A. (1999). *Action Research: Relevant, Classroom-Based Professional Development*. Presentation at the annual statewide conference of New York State Teacher Center Directors, Syracuse, NY.
- Abeille, A. (1999). *Examination of Student Work as a Professional Development Strategy*. Presentation at the New York State Regional Networks of Teacher Centers, Rochester, NY.
- Abeille, A. (1999). *Implementing effective job-embedded professional development strategies*. Presentation at the annual statewide conference of New York State Teacher Center Directors, Syracuse, NY.
- Abeille, A. (1999). *Developing and Maximizing the Use of Individual Professional Development Plans for Rhode Island Re-certification*. Presentation at the Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Providence, RI.
- Abeille, A. (1999). *Integrating Danielson's Framework for Teaching into Professional Study Groups for Teachers*. Presentation at Timberlane (NH) School District, Hampstead, NH.
- Abeille, A. (1999). *Evaluating Technology Integration Initiatives*. Presentation at State Education Agency Academy sponsored by SouthEast and Island Regional Technology in Education Consortium, Smith Mountain Lake, VA.
- Abeille, A. (1999). *Designing and Conducting Effective Evaluation of Teacher Mentoring Programs*. Presentation at the Mentoring Institute at Salve Regina College, Newport, Rhode Island.
- Abeille, A. (1998). *Analyzing qualitative data*. Presentation at the annual statewide conference of New York State Teacher Center Directors, Albany, NY.
- Abeille, A. (1998). *Conducting focus groups as a tool for conducting professional development needs assessments and evaluations*. Presentation at the New York State Regional Networks of Teacher Centers, Old Forge, NY.
- Abeille, A. (1998). *Developing evidence of impact of job-embedded professional development strategies*. Presentation at the annual statewide conference of New York State Teacher Center Directors, Albany, NY.

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- Abeille, A. (November, 1998). *The status of mentoring in the state of Rhode Island: Lessons learned*. Session for statewide conference on mentoring sponsored by the Rhode Island Department of Education, the Rhode Island Federation of Teachers, and the Rhode Island Education Association, Providence, RI.
- Abeille, A. (1997). *Using focus groups as tools for school wide needs assessments*. Presentation for the New England Comprehensive Assistance Center Annual Schoolwide Congress, Nashua, NH.
- Rallis, S. F., Rossman, G .B., Phlegar, J .M., & Abeille, A. (1995). *Dynamic teachers: Leaders of change*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, Inc.
- Abeille, A. (1994. November). *Do social justice issues create or intensify roadblocks to evaluation implementation?* Presentation of a paper at the American Evaluation Association, Boston, MA.
- Eddy, E. D., Challener, D. D., & Abeille, A. (Eds.) (1993, May). *Imagine . . .Providence blueprint for education*. The Report of the PROBE Commission. Public Education Fund, Providence, RI.

## **SELECTED PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES**

**MEMBER, NATIONAL ADVISORY BOARD FOR THE NATIONAL STAFF DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL PROJECT ENTITLED “EVALUATION OF STAFF DEVELOPMENT: DEMONSTRATING THE IMPACT”**

## **PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS**

American Evaluation Association

**MARILYN R. CROCKER, Ed.D.**  
123 Sanborn Road  
West Newfield, ME 04095  
Telephone and FAX: (207) 793-3711  
Email: mrcrocker@psouth.net

## **EDUCATION**

- 1994 Ed.D., Educational Administration, Training & Policy Studies, Boston University  
1964 M.A.T., History, Harvard University  
1963 B.A., American Studies, Smith College

## **PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

- 1986 - present President, Marilyn Crocker & Associates, Inc.,  
Organizational Development and Evaluation, West Newfield, ME
- 1983 - 1986 Vice President, Strategic Planning & Marketing Services,  
Red Lobster Seafood Restaurants, Orlando, FL
- 1981 - 1983 Senior Manager of Strategic Planning and Internal Consulting,  
McDonald's Corporation, Oak Brook, IL
- 1978 - 1981 Vice President of Institutional Planning and Fund Raising Counsel,  
Sumner G. Rahr & Co., Inc., Chicago, IL
- 1972 - 1978 Director of International Education and Community Development  
Programs, Institute of Cultural Affairs: Bombay; Hong Kong;  
Nairobi; Singapore; Sydney; & Chicago, IL
- 1971 - 1972 Teacher, English & Social Studies, Seventh Avenue Junior High  
School, Newark, NJ
- 1970 - 1971 Teacher, Secondary English, Burwood School, Sydney, Australia
- 1969 - 1970 Teacher, Secondary English & History, Singapore American  
School, Republic of Singapore
- 1968 - 1969 Instructor, History & Social Science, Chicago City College,  
Chicago, IL
- 1967 - 1968 Instructor, Literature & Composition, Northern Essex Community  
College, Haverhill, MA

- 1965 - 1967      Instructor, Literature & Composition, Colby Junior College,  
New London, NH
- 1964 - 1965      Teacher, English & Social Studies, F. A. Day Junior High School,  
Newton, MA

### **PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS**

American Society for Training and Development  
Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development  
International Association of Facilitators  
National Middle School Association  
National Staff Development Council  
Pi Lambda Theta, (Harvard University Chapter)  
Phi Beta Delta, (Boston University Chapter)  
Phi Delta Kappa, (Boston University Chapter)

### **CONSULTING SERVICES TO EDUCATIONAL & HUMAN SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS**

- Alaska Head Start Directors Association, Anchorage, AK
- Strategic Planning for Competency Based Leadership Academy, 1997-98
- Albuquerque Office of Child Development, Albuquerque, NM
- Strategic Planning for Early Head Start Programs, 2000
- American Council on Rural Special Education, Manhattan, KS
- Board Development and Strategic Planning, 2000
- Andover Newton Theological School, Newton, MA
- Organizational Evaluation, 1999-2000
- Barnstable Middle School, Marstons, Mills, MA
- Development of Faculty and Administration Shared Vision 1997-98
- Boston University, Boston Leadership Academy, Boston, MA
- External Evaluation of School Leadership for Student Achievement, 1995
- Breaking Ranks In The Ocean State, Providence, RI
- Board Counsel and Planning for Support of High School Reform, 1998-99
- Brigham Young University, Provo, UT
- Strategic Planning for Public School Partnerships, 1988
- Brown University, The Education Alliance, Providence, RI

- Organizational Planning & Management Counsel, 1994

Calvert County School District, Prince Frederick, MD

- Strategic Planning for Inclusive Schools, 2000

Coventry Middle School, Coventry, RI

- Strategic Plan for School Improvement, 1999, 2000

Cranston Public Schools, Cranston, RI

- Planning Counsel to the Following School Improvement Teams:
  - Stadium School, 1999
  - George Peters School, 1999
  - Garden City School, 1999
  - Edgewood Highland School, 1999

Council for Exceptional Children, Reston, VA

- Design and Facilitation of Working Forum for Inclusive Schools, 1994

Davis County School District, Farmington, UT

- Administrator and Teacher Development Laboratory, 1989, 1990

Dreamweavers Southwest, Inc., Albuquerque, NM

- Facilitation of Strategic Plan for Mentor Capacity Building Project 1994-95
- Training Design and Facilitation of Leadership Curriculum for Mentor Project, for Indian Head Start Management teams in 14 pueblos 1995,1996,1997,1998

Eckerd College, St. Petersburg, FL

- Counsel for Capital Campaign; Board Development, 1987-1988

Education Development Corporation, Newton, MA

- Quality Management Conference Training and Technical Assistance for Region I Head Start, 1994

Federal Resource Center, Washington, DC

- Pre-Conference & Conference Workshops for OSEP's Annual Technical Assistance & Dissemination Conference, 1995, 1997, 1998

Federation for Children with Special Needs, Boston, MA

- Management Counsel, Staff Training, Board Development, 1993, 1994, 1995
- Facilitator Training Curriculum Development, Site Selection Design; Site Visit Briefing for Parents Engaged in Education Reform (PEER) Project 1997

George A. Lewis Middle School, Boston, MA

- Facilitation of Annual Education Plan; Staff Development, 1992, 1993

George Washington University Center for Equity and Excellence, Alexandria, VA

- Staff Training in Facilitation, Communication & Conflict Resolution Methods, 1997
- Team Development & Organizational Alignment, 1997

Indiana State Department of Education, Indianapolis, IN

- Strategic Vision Development, 1995

Johnston Public Schools, Johnston, RI

- Winsor Hill Elementary School - Site-based Planning for Inclusive Practices, 1996
- Graniteville Elementary School -Site-based Planning for Inclusive Practices, 1996

Jordan School District, Salt Lake City, UT

- District Strategic Planning, 1988
- Inclusion Implementation Planning, 1994

Maryland State Department of Education, Baltimore, MD

- Planning Facilitation: Capacity Building for Inclusive Education, 1997-1998, 2000

Mountain Plains Regional Resource Center, Logan, UT

- Facilitator Training and Staff Visioning, 1997
- Strategic Planning, 1998, 2000

Measured Progress, Dover, NH

- Strategic Planning for Alternate Assessments, 2000

Nathanael Greene Middle School, Providence, RI

- Strategic Planning for School Improvement, 1999, 2000

National Association of State Directors of Special Education, Washington, DC

- Research Forum for Inclusive Accountability Systems, 1995
- Facilitation of Board Strategic Plan, 1996, 2000
- Design and Facilitation of Wingspread Conferences on Educational Accountability, 1996, 1997, 1998
- Counsel for Comprehensive System of Professional Development, 1997
- Facilitation of Policy Forum: The Continuum Revisited, 1998

National American Indian Head Start Resource Center, Oklahoma City, OK

- Strategic Planning, Team Building and Leadership Development, 1993, 2000

National Indian Head Start Directors Association, Washington, DC

- Design and Facilitation of National Agenda Forum, 1993, 1996
- Board Training, 1997, 1998
- National Conference Presenter, 1998, 1999

National Migrant Head Start Resource Center, Baltimore, MD

- Team Building Training and Leadership Development, 1992, 1994

New Mexico/Colorado Indian Directors Association, Albuquerque, NM

- Strategic Plan Development, 1994 -95, 1997, 1998

New Mexico Department of Children, Youth & Families, Santa Fe, NM

- Team Management Training for Community Integrated Service Project, 1995, 1996, 1997, 2000

North Smithfield Public Schools, North Smithfield, RI

- Evaluation of Project Teaching Learning Community, 1998-1999

Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Disabilities, Columbus, OH

- Strategic Planning and Leadership Development, 1987, 1989

Oklahoma Indian Head Start Directors Association, Tulsa, OK

- Strategic Planning for Competency Based Leadership Academy, 1997

Old Rochester Regional School District, Marion, MA

- District Strategic Planning, 1996-97
- Program Evaluation of Gifted and Talented Program, 1997

Professional Development Leadership Academy, Washington, DC

- Strategic Visioning and Action Planning, 2000

Providence College, Providence, RI

- Implementation Planning for Beginning Teacher Standards, 1997

Rhode Island Association of School Principals, Providence, RI

- Strategic Planning, 1998-99

Rhode Island Departments of Education and Health Joint Taskforce, Providence, RI

- Design and Facilitation of School Oral Health Plan, 1999

Rhode Island Departments of Education and Labor Joint Taskforce, Providence, RI

- Implementation Planning for School-to-Work Initiative, 1999

Rhode Island Middle Level Educators' Association, Providence, RI

- Board Strategic Planning, 1995, 2000
- External Evaluation for Standards Network Project, 1999, 2000, 2001

Rhode Island Skills Commission, Providence, RI

- External Evaluation for Certificate of Initial Mastery (CIM) Pilot, 2000

Rhode Island Tobacco Control Coalition, Providence, RI

- Leadership Team Strategic Planning, 2000

Rochester Memorial School, Rochester, MA

- School Improvement Team Training, 1996

Rogers High School, Newport, RI

- Department Head Strategic Planning Retreat, 1996

Rollins College, Winter Park, FL

- Rollins-Jamaica Village Development Program Design & Evaluation 1987

Salt Lake District Department of Special Education, Salt Lake City, UT

- Strategic Planning for Educational Inclusion, 1990

San Juan County Community Integrated Services Project, Farmington, NM

- Strategic Planning, 1995-96

Sippican Elementary School, Marion, MA

- Counsel to Administration and School Site Council, 1998

Southeast Regional Resource Center, Montgomery, AL

- Facilitator Training, 1999

Southeastern Massachusetts Curriculum Exchange, Fall River, MA

- Organizational Development Planning, 1997

Southwest Consortium of Indian Head Start Directors, Albuquerque NM

- Strategic Planning, 1999

Southern Ute Child & Family Center Head Start Program, Farmington NM

- Strategic Planning for On-site Review Preparation, 1995

State of Montana Office of Public Instruction, Helena MT

- Facilitator Training, 1998

State of Rhode Island & Providence Plantations Department of Education, RI

- Child Opportunity Zones Needs Assessment Counsel, 1994
- Facilitation of Least Restrictive Environment Taskforce Strategic Plan, 1995
- Facilitation of State Curriculum Framework Development Process, 1994-97
  - Arts Curriculum Framework, 1997
  - Family & Consumer Education Curriculum Framework, 1996
  - Health Curriculum Framework, 1995-96
  - Mathematics Curriculum Framework, 1994
  - Tech Prep Curriculum Framework, 1997
- Facilitation of Student Assessment Planning, 1994
- Facilitation of Tech Prep Curriculum, Breaking Ranks Summer Institute, 1997
- Office of Integrated Social Services, Facilitation of Interdepartmental Coordination Team Planning, 1997

## State of Rhode Island &amp; Providence Plantations Department of Education (cont'd)

- Strategic Planning Counsel, Carnegie Middle School Network, 1995-98
  - Coventry Middle School, Coventry, RI
  - John F. Deering Middle School, West Warwick, RI
  - Joseph Jenks Junior High School, Pawtucket, RI
  - Kickemuit Middle School, Bristol-Warren, RI
  - Nathan Bishop Middle School, Providence, RI
  - Nathaniel Green Middle School, Providence, RI
  - Oliver Hazard Perry Middle School, Providence, RI
  - Roger Williams Middle School, Providence, RI
  - Samuel Slater Junior High School, Pawtucket, RI
  - Woonsocket Middle School, Woonsocket, RI
- Strategic Planning. Diverse Learning Needs Teams, 1995, 1996, 1997
- School Accountability for Learning and Teaching (SALT), Evaluation of Statewide Middle Level Pilot, 1998-1999
  - SALT School Compact Design Evaluation, Focus Group 2000
  - SALT School Visit Report Evaluation, Focus Group 1998
- SALT Guide for Supporting English Language Learners, Task Force Facilitation 2000
  - SALT Design and Implementation of 360 Evaluation/Feedback, 2000-2001

## Taos Head Start Program, Taos, NM

- Strategic Planning for Program Expansion and Relocation, 1995
- Strategic Planning for Program Integration, 1998

## University of Kentucky, Mid-South Regional Resource Center, Lexington, KY

- Strategic Planning, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995, 1997, 1999
- State Transition Systems Change Evaluation, 1996

## U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education, Washington, D.C.

- Conference Design and Facilitation of National Agenda Workshop, 1993
- Facilitation of Policy Forum on Goals 2000 Implementation, 1994
- Facilitation of OSEP Monitoring Meeting, 1998, 1999

## US. Navy Nuclear Power School, Orlando, FL

- Management Development Training, 1987-1989

## Utah Learning Resource Center, Salt Lake City, UT

- Strategic Planning, Facilitator Training and Staff Development, 1989, 1993

## Utah Mentor Teachers Academy, Salt Lake City, UT

- Leadership Development Laboratory in Facilitator Competencies, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000

## Utah State Office of Education, Salt Lake City, UT

- Leadership Development Laboratory, 1990, 1991

Valencia Community College, Women's Center, Winter Park, FL

- Counsel for Continuing Education Curriculum Development, 1987

Wasatch County School District, Heber City, UT

- District Strategic Planning; Program Design for Students At Risk, 1988, 1989

Waterville Public Schools, Waterville, ME

- Program Evaluation for Comprehensive School Health Program, 2000

Weber County School District, Ogden UT

- Administrator Training, 1993

West Warwick School District, West Warwick, RI

- Counsel & Facilitation of District Strategic Planning Process, 1997-1999
- Counsel to the Following School Improvement Teams
  - Greenbush Elementary, 1997, 1998
  - John Horgan Elementary, 1994, 1995, 1997, 1998, 1999
  - West Warwick High School, 1998, 1999

Western Regional Resource Center, Eugene, OR

- Organizational Planning, 1998

### **CONSULTING SERVICES TO BUSINESS ORGANIZATIONS**

Florida Public Relations Association, Orlando, FL

- Management Development and Marketing Training, 1986

General Motors Canada, Ltd., Oshawa, Ontario, Canada

- Employee Performance Management System Development, 1989

Horizons Unlimited Travel, Chicago, IL

- Marketing Planning, 1986

HUTCO, Inc., Insurance, Montreal, Canada

- Strategic Planning, 1988

McCree Construction Co., Orlando, FL

- Executive Counsel; Strategic Planning, 1989

Morrison's Restaurants, Inc., Silver Spoon Concept, Mobile, AL

- Local Store Marketing Development, 1990

Peninsula Engineering Corp., Orlando, FL

- Executive Counsel; Strategic Planning; Management Development, 1987-1993

Pizza Hut National Marketing Department, Wichita, KS

- Management Development; Strategic Market Planning, 1986 - 1988

ProCom Communications, Phoenix, AZ

- Strategic Planning, 1988

Three Feathers Associates, Norman, OK

- Project Planning and Leadership Development, 1992, 1993
- Strategic Planning for Business Repositioning, 1998, 2000

Winthrop Community Access Television, Winthrop, MA

- Strategic Planning; Team Building, 1992

Wyndam Hotels, Inc., Kingston, Jamaica

- Strategic Planning; Marketing Counsel, 1986 – 1987

## **PUBLICATIONS AND PAPERS**

*The Maneuver Method: An Action Planning-Problem-Solving Workbook for Managers*  
(Phoenix: Gadway Training Institute, 1996)

*Transforming A Troubled School: An Ethnographic Study of the Change Process In An Urban Middle School.* Doctoral dissertation, Boston University, 1994

*Teacher Burnout, A Systems Dynamics Analysis of the Challenge.* Unpublished paper, 1990

*Group Process Facilitation - A Manual for Organizational Leaders,* (Salt Lake City: Utah Learning Resource Center, 1989)

*Total Marketing Approach: Team Leadership for Building Business Profitability, A Marketing Management Field book* (Oak Brook, IL: McDonald's, 1982)

*Networking*, (Chicago: Olympic Learning, 1978)

*Negotiation*, (Chicago: Olympic Learning, 1978)

*Delegation*, (Chicago: Olympic Learning, 1978)

*Socio-Economic Development: A Handbook for Local Practitioners*. Co-author.  
(Chicago: ICA International, 1977)

*Human Development Project Plan* for integrated socio-economic community development projects in the following locations (Chicago: ICA International, 1975-1978):

*Bananeiras*, Federated Republic of Brazil  
*Bayad el Arab*, Arab Republic of Egypt  
*Fifth City*, Chicago, USA  
*Isle of Dogs*, London, England, UK  
*Kawangware*, Nairobi, Kenya  
*Kendur*, Maharashtra, Republic of India  
*Kreutzberg Ost*, West Berlin, German Federal Republic  
*Kwang Yung Il*, Jeju, Republic of Korea  
*Majuro*, Marshall Islands, UN Trust Territory of the Pacific  
*Maliwada*, Maharashtra, Republic of India  
*Nadlapur*, Andhra Pradesh, Republic of India  
*Oombulgurri*, N.T., Commonwealth of Australia  
*Sol de Septiembre*, Republic of Chile  
*Sudtonggan*, Cebu, Republic of the Philippines

Resume for  
**Francis A. Richards**

Work Address

Rhode Island Department of Elementary  
And Secondary Education  
255 Westminster Street  
Providence, Rhode Island  
02903-3400

Home Address

15 Creighton Street  
Providence, Rhode Island  
02906  
Tel: (401) 521-2251

Tel: (401) 222-4600 Ext. 2194

Fax: (401) 222-2537

E-mail: [ride0782@ride.ri.net](mailto:ride0782@ride.ri.net)

**Current Responsibilities**

**Commissioner's Staff:** Policy Support for school improvement and accountability and fiscal equity, including:

- Participate in design of a progressive support and intervention initiative, a component of the school accountability for learning and teaching (SALT) system,
- Support continued development and implementation of department strategic plan, and
- Support the use of indicators to guide departmental strategic planning.

**Deputy Commissioner:** Serve as liaison to the Office of School Improvement and Accountability with primary responsibility to develop the School Accountability for Learning and Teaching (SALT) system. Serve as project manager for SALT, including overseeing the:

- Development of SALT school guides and other resources,
- design and implementation of training related to SALT,
- Designing and implementation a feedback system for quality improvement, and
- Administration of the SALT school visit system.

**Rhode Island Skills Commission:** Primary responsibility for developing a set of integrated assessments that can be used to award the Certificate of Initial Mastery (CIM) in a consortium of districts.

**Providence Field Service Team:** Support seven Providence schools as they conduct SALT activities.

**References**

Mr. Peter McWalters, Commissioner, Rhode Island Department of Education  
(401) 222-4600 X 2000

Dr. Todd Flaherty, Deputy Commissioner, Rhode Island Department of Education  
(401) 222-4600

Dr. Susan Lusi, Assistant Commissioner, Rhode Island Department of Education  
(401) 222-4600, X 2002

**References (contd.)**

Mr. Kenneth Fish, Director, Office of School Improvement and Accountability,  
Rhode Island Department of Education

(401) 222-4600 X 2200

Mr. Rocco Rainone, Co-Director, The Rhode Island Skills Commission,

(401) 222-4600 X 2190

Ms. Paula Rossi, Director, Human Resources,

Rhode Island Department of Education

(401) 222-4600 X 2430

**Previous Responsibilities**

**Commissioner's Office:** 1999 Supported superintendent search that successfully brought Diana Lam to Providence. Participated in the development of an Empowerment Zone Grant for the City of Providence.

1997-98: *InformationWorks!* project co-manager: Coordinated the development and implementation of two major sources of information for school self-study, *InformationWorks!*, which reports state assessment data and other critical statistics, and the SALT Survey, which reports a wide range of information about instructional practice, governance, professional development, etc. Coordinated public engagement around the introduction of these tools and provided training for the Department's Field Service Teams to assist schools in using these tools.

1991-97: Data analysis and other work for reforming state financial aid system, particularly with respect to the Joint Senate House Commission on Financial Reform and the Mayor's Task Force, which focused on the financial needs of the providence school system.

1996-98: Developed indicators of Department performance.

1991-92: Worked on initiative team that developed the Guaranteed Student Entitlement (GSE).

**Deputy Commissioner's Office:** 1996-97: Evaluated Field Service system and designed training for Field Service Teams in the use of data to improve schools.

**Office of School Improvement and Accountability:** 1995-97: Worked with a core team to Design and pilot an accountability system for public schools, based on a working document "School Accountability for Learning and Teaching" (SALT). This involved working with the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC), the Carnegie middle schools, and Title I schoolwide projects to develop procedures for school self-study, school visits, school improvement planning, district strategic planning and progressive support and interventions.

1995-96: Oversaw the evaluation of the department's Goals 2000 (Working Wonders) grants, with particular responsibility for the secondary reform grant (Breaking Ranks in the Ocean State).

1995 to present: Member of support team for Title I schoolwide projects.

1994-95: Member of team authoring SAIL document.

1994-95: Evaluation of Poverty Fund.

1992-93: Member, School Improvement Initiative Team.

**Office of Assessment: 1990-93: Administrator of the Rhode Island Distinguished Merit Program, which conducted multiple choice and performance tests in 21 areas.**

1991-92: Evaluator of Dropout Prevention projects.

1987-93: Evaluator attached to Chapter I program.

1987-90: Evaluator of the William F. Davies Jr. Career and Technical School

**Miscellaneous:** Project district enrollments. Administer Robert C. Byrd scholarship program, National Youth Science Camp program.

**Previous Employment**

1985-87: Consultant at the Center for evaluation and Research at Rhode Island College. Responsibilities included reporting results from the 1985-86 and 1986-87 State Assessment Program to the Rhode Island Department of Education.

1983-87: Research Associate at the Dare Institute. Responsibilities include editing volumes II and III of the series "Beyond Formal Operations: Late Adolescent and Early Adult Cognitive Development".

1984-1985: Statistical consultant for Drs. Weinberg and Lally, Roger Williams Hospital. Responsibilities included analysis of experimental and survey data.

1978-1982: Employed as a graduate student in the capacities of research assistant, teaching assistant and data analyst.

1975-1978: Director of the Community Nursery School in Lexington, Massachusetts. Responsibilities included directing teaching staff of 10, consulting with parent Board of Directors, overseeing budget.

1975: Director and Teacher in the Fidelis Way day Care Center, Brighton, Massachusetts. Responsibilities included establishing a day Care Center in the Fidelis Way Housing Project under the auspices of the Alston Area Planning Action Council.

1971-1973: Executive Secretary of the Ethiopian Child and Family Welfare Association, Addis Adaba, Ethiopia. Job involved administration of 3 homes for 150 street boys and girls under the direction of an Ethiopian Board of Directors. Responsibilities included fund raising, budget administration and the health and education of children.

1970-1971: Teacher in the Lemuel Shattuck Day Care Center, Lemuel Shattuck Hospital, Jamaica Plain, Boston, Massachusetts. Responsibilities included establishing a Day Care Center in the Shattuck Hospital under the auspices of the National Council of Jewish Women.

### **Education**

Doctoral candidate (ABD) in the Department of Human Development and Family Studies, Cornell University, thesis on the interrelations of late and post-adolescent patterns of cognitive development. Major concentration in adolescent development, minor concentrations in cognitive development and mathematical psychology.

1973-1974: Master of Education, Harvard University Graduate School of Education.

1963-1968: Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy and Religion, Haverford College.

### **Publications**

SALTWORKS School by School

SALT Guides:

- Building a School Improvement Team
- Writing a School Improvement Plan
- Conducting Self-Study
- Using State Assessment Results
- Considering Equity Gaps
- Using the SALT Survey
- Examining Student Work
- Following a Student
- Building Conclusions
- Using the School Visit Report
- Preparing to Host a School Visit
- Conducting School Report Night

SALT Resources

- A review of Best Practice Teacher Evaluation
- Job-Embedded Professional Development

**Authored Publications**

Richards, F. A. (1986). Models of equilibrium and postformal cognitive development. In M. L. Commons, J. D. Sinnot, F. A. Richards, and C. Armon (Eds.), Beyond formal operations III: Models and methods in the study of adolescent and adult thought. New York: Praeger.

Richards, F. A., & Commons, M. L. (1986). A psychophysical analysis of postformal development: Applying signal detection to cognitive behavior on postformal tasks. In M. L. Commons, J.D. Sinnot, F. A. Richards, and C. Armon (Eds.). Beyond formal operations III: Models and methods in the study of adolescent and adult thought. New York: Oxford University Press.

Richards, F.A., & Commons, M.L. (1986). Postformal cognitive-developmental research: Some of its historical antecedents and a review of its current status. In C. N. Alexander, E. J. Langer, and R. M. Detzel (Eds.). Alternative endpoints to human development. New York: Oxford University Press.

Richards, F. A. & Commons, M.L. (1984). Systematic, metasystematic and cross-paradigmatic reasoning: A case for stages of reasoning beyond formal operations. In M. L. Commons, F. A. Richards & C. Armon (Eds.). Beyond formal operations: Late adolescent and adult cognitive development. (pp.92-119). New York: Praeger.

Basseches, M., Hamilton, S., & Richards, F. (1980). The impact of participatory-democratic work experience on adolescent development. A methodological report. Paper presented at annual meeting on American Educational Research Association, Boston, Massachusetts, available from Educational Resources Information Center.

Commons, M.L. & Richards, F. A. (1984a). A general model of stage theory. In M.L. Commons, F. A. Richards & C. Armon (Eds.), Beyond formal operations: Late adolescent and adult cognitive development: (pp.120-140). New York: Praeger.

Commons, M. L. & Richards, F. A. (1984b). Applying the general stage model. In M. L. Commons, F.A. Richards & C. Armon (Eds.), Beyond formal operations: Late adolescent and adult cognitive development: (pp.141-157). New York: Praeger.

Commons, M. L., Richards, F. A., & Kuhn, D. (1982). Systematic and metasystematic reasoning: A case for levels of reasoning beyond Piaget's stage of formal operations. Child Development, 53, 1058-1069.

Hamilton, S.F., Basseches, M. A., and Richards, F. A., 1985). Participatory-democratic work and adolescents' mental health. American Journal of Community Psychology, 13 (4).

Hamilton, S. F., Richards, F. A., Stewart, O.K., and Frankel, W. B. (1983). The use of the psychosocial maturity inventory in evaluations of Youth Conservation Corps programs. Children and Youth Services Review, 5, 357-373.

### **Professional Presentations**

“Models of Equilibrium and Postformal Development”, given at Beyond Formal Operations 2: The Development of Adolescent and Adult Thought and Perception: Harvard University, June 21-23, 1985.

“A Psychophysical analysis of Postformal Development: applying Signal Detection to Cognitive Behavior on Postformal Tasks: given at Beyond Formal Operations II: The Development of Adolescent and Adult Thought and Perception; Harvard University, June 21-23, 1985.

“A Systematic, Metasystematic, and Cross-Paradigmatic Reasoning: A Case for Stages of Reasoning Beyond Formal Operations”, given at the Symposium on Postformal Operations: Late Adolescence and Adulthood; Harvard University, March 31 & April 1, 1981.

### **Reports**

SPIRIT 1986-1987 Final Report. Submitted (April 1987) to the SPIRIT Board. Prepared by Francis A. Richards.

Rhode Island State Assessment Program, 1985-86 Basic Skills, Health Knowledge, and Physical Fitness Testing Results. Executive Summary Report. Submitted (December 1986) to the Rhode Island Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education. Prepared by Dr. John Finger, Dr. Robert Carey, Dr. Richard Doolittle and Mr. Francis Richards under the direction of Dr. John Finger.

Rhode Island State Assessment Program, 1985-86 Basic Skills, Health knowledge, and Physical Fitness Testing Results. Technical Report. Submitted (November 1986) to the Rhode Island Department of Education. Prepared by Mr. Francis Richards under the direction of Dr. John Finger.

The New York State Child Protective Services Training Institute: Third Quarterly and Preliminary Final Report of the Child Protective Services Training Institute (1981-1982). Prepared by Dr. Molly Laird, Ms. Cathy Dolce, Mr. Francis Richards, and Ms Martha Moorehouse under the direction of Dr. Molly Laird.

The New York Child Protective Services Training Institute: Evaluations Report of the Basic Training of the Child Protective Services Training Institute (1980-1981). Prepared by Dr. Molly Laird, Mr. Francis Richards and Ms. Jane Levine under the directions of Dr. Molly Laird.

**Service**

Editor, Journal of Adult Development, 1992-present.

Currently Deacon and Member of Canvass Committee, First Unitarian Church, Providence; Member, Prudential Committee (1997-99); Co-Chair of the Canvass Committee (1995-96); Chair, Religious Education Committee (1990-93).

President, Local 2012 AFT, Rhode Island Department of Education Professional Workers, 1994-96.

**THOMAS A. WILSON**

Principal Partner  
 Catalpa. Ltd.  
 873 Warwick Avenue  
 Warwick, Rhode Island 02888  
 (401) 467-5645

**SUMMARY OF EXPERIENCE**

Thirty-five years of experience in the accountability of public schools. Major work includes how to measure what schools do, how to assess reform efforts, how to use information to help schools improve, how to use information in establishing new schools; how to report to communities about their schools and how to report to private/public funders who support school reform. Extensive work in comparing American traditions of accountability with other nations, particularly Great Britain.

**POSITIONS HELD**

CATALPA LTD. 1997-Present  
 President

Principal Consultant for SALT to the Rhode Island Department of Education  
 Other consultancies include: Illinois Board of Education; Providence, Narraganset, Ponganset, Pawtucket, West Warwick, Lincoln, Minneapolis Minnesota school departments; Coalition for Improved Education in South Shore (Chicago); the Annenberg Institute for School Reform; the Panasonic Foundation, the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education and SchoolWorks.

LAB AT BROWN 1997-2000  
 Senior Research Associate

Principal researcher for two-year project studying the accreditation process of the Commission for Public Secondary Schools of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges. With a special emphasis on the school Visit, this project seeks to understand how accreditation works and will make recommendations for improving it.

Consultant to the Boston Cluster # 7 Project.

Consultancy to RIDE also supported in part by the LAB.

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT 1993- Present  
 Brown University  
 Research Fellow

Wrote *Reaching for a Better Standard: English School Inspection and the Dilemma of Accountability for American Public Schools*. Worked with several groups on the implications of the inspection study for American practice including: The Rhode Island Department of Education, the California Department of Education, the Illinois State Board of Education, groups and individuals in Chicago, New York and Providence.

CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF TESTING, EVALUATION  
AND EDUCATIONAL POLICY

1992—1993

Boston College  
Senior Research Fellow

Study Director for The School Inspection Study. Developed proposal and carried out field work in England on a study of new assessment methods for public schools.

COALITION OF ESSENTIAL SCHOOLS

1987-1992

Brown University  
Special Assistant to the Chairman  
Director of Development  
Lecturer in Education

Managed fund raising; totaling over \$20 million. Superintended special projects, e.g., planning for the national evaluation of the Coalition and start-up work on new initiatives. Represented the Chairman, including testifying before Congress. Mentored Brown students interested in school reform.

BROWN UNIVERSITY

Development Office

1984-1987

Director, Funding Computing in Higher Education  
Special Assistant to the Vice President for Development  
Acting Associate Director of Institute for Research in Information and Scholarship

Planned and implemented special projects for the Development Office and the University. Coordinated the preparation of a University mission statement on future directions in Brown's computing program. Managed successful campaign to raise \$40 million for new university computing facility. Coordinated the successful accreditation of the University's teacher preparation programs using experimental national standards.

CAMBIUM, INC.  
Chicago, Illinois

1979-1984

President

Consulted with over fifteen community agencies and schools serving Chicago youth. Provided consulting help for the following tasks: articulating the organization's mission; transforming its organizational structure; designing and carrying out assessment of its activities; designing and setting new program initiatives in place; planning for effective coping with change; fund raising (over \$1 million raised) and providing counsel for executive leaders.

CENTER FOR NEW SCHOOLS  
Chicago, Illinois  
President

1971-1979

The Center's work focused on reforming urban public education through supporting efforts to start new schools or redesign existing ones. Co-founded and provided leadership to the Center, which grew to a national staff of over fifty. Secured private, state and federal funding of over \$6 million. Worked with co-principals on school reform design for Illinois State Board of Education. Directed several assessment and technical-assistance projects, including Documentation and Technical Assistance, a multi-million dollar contract with the National Institute of Education

URBAN RESEARCH CORPORATION  
Chicago, Illinois

1969-1970

Director, Education Division

Under contract to the Chicago Board of Education, with support from the Chicago business community, we designed and established the Chicago Public High School for Metropolitan Studies (Metro). This nationally acclaimed school-without-walls gave particular attention to its relationship to parents and community. Developed a comprehensive assessment program for studying Metro's establishment, which received support from the University of Illinois, the Carnegie Corporation and the National Institute of Education.

HARVARD UNIVERSITY

1966-1969

Teaching Fellow  
Research Assistant  
Special Consultant for Evaluation -- Upward Bound

Designed and taught undergraduate courses on urban school change; interviewed and observed black and white students in newly integrated classes; designed and piloted over two years an intense and formative evaluation of Harvard's Project Upward Bound.

CARDOZO HIGH SCHOOL  
District of Columbia Public Schools

1963-1965

English Teacher

## Intern, Cardozo Pilot Project in Urban Teaching

Contributed to the development of the Pilot Project in Urban Teaching that won national acclaim for its work on new pedagogical methods, new curriculum and new approaches to teacher training for urban classrooms. Followed the intern year with a full year as a classroom teacher to further develop the new approaches.

## PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEER -- THE PHILIPPINES

1961-1963

Educational Aide in Science, English and Community Development

**EDUCATION**

## HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Ed.D., 1970

Field: Human Development.

Specialties: Human growth and education in a cross-cultural context. Theory and practice of program evaluation. Student competence, race and integration. Federal policy and school improvement.

## HOWARD UNIVERSITY

M.A.T., 1965

Field: Teaching English in the urban secondary school.

Specialties: Teaching American literature to black urban high school students. Apprenticeship models for teacher training. The role of curriculum development in the improvement of school practice.

## EARLHAM COLLEGE

B.A., 1961

Field: English.

Specialties: American Literature. Theater. Editor of student literary magazine. Chairman of board responsible for all campus publications and radio station.

## ADDITIONAL STUDY:

College Cevenol, Chambon-Sur-Lignon, France

Malabar College, Kerala, India

St. Nicholas School of the Theater Arts, Chicago

**PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES**

Member of the Board of Directors, School One. Vice President 1990-92.

1989-Present

Member of the Rhode Island Skills Commission.

1990--1992

- Member of the Education Council of the Greater Providence Chamber of Commerce. 1990-1992
- Certified Member of the National Society of Fund Raising Executives (now "retired").1983-present
- Consultant to school systems, including Boston, Massachusetts; Chicago, Illinois; Worcester, Massachusetts; Newton, Iowa; and Washington, DC. 1970-1984
- Member of the American Educational Research Association. Presentations at AERA professional meetings on alternative evaluations, technical assistance strategies and school problem solving. 1969-1979
- Elected member, Executive Council of the Harvard Graduate School of Education Alumni Council. 1970-1974
- Directed Carnegie Conference on Educational Evaluation and Technical Assistance Center for New Schools. 1974
- Member, Task Force of the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools which prepared regulations for the accreditation of alternative schools. 1973
- Community representative to EDUCOM, a Chicago wide planning process that reviewed and proposed priorities for Chicago Public Schools. 1970
- Member, Editorial Board of the Harvard Educational Review. 1968-1969

## PUBLICATIONS

*Visiting Accreditation: Strengthening the Regional Accreditation Process*. March 1999. The LAB at Brown.

*Accreditation Standards and School Improvement: Putting Methodology in its Proper Place*. Chapter in *Designing Standards that Work for Professional Development Schools*. 1998. National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education.

Various SALT Handbooks related to the SALT visit.

*Foundations of the Catalpa School Visit*. 1999. Catalpa Ltd.

*SALT: A Blueprint for School Accountability for Learning and Teaching*. Rhode Island School Accountability Team. Rhode Island Department of Education, July 1996. (Served as Principal Consultant and writer to the Accountability Team.)

“On Knowing the Secret of Schools: Lessons from the British on Judging Schools with their Complexities in Mind,” *Education Week*, January 17, 1996, p. 44.

*Reaching for a Better Standard: English School Inspection and the Dilemma of Accountability for American Public Schools*. New York, Teachers College Press, 1996.

“Notes on the American fascination with the English tradition of school inspection.” *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 1995, 25(1), 89-96.

*Blueprint for Teacher Education 1988-1993: Meeting New Standards*. Brown University. Education Department. 1988.

*National Leadership for the Information Society*. Brown University. 1985. An in-depth case statement to win federal support for Brown's advanced academic computing program.

*Putting the Local School Pattern Together: A Desegregation Operations Manual for School Site Leadership*. A Cambium publication for the Chicago Board of Education, 1983.

*A Place to Come To*. Englewood Health Services, 1982. A case statement for this community-based school for children with learning difficulties, which supported successful fund-raising.

*Definition and Development: An Evaluation Study of Revisions in the NAES College Degree*. NAES College, July 1981. A reflective study on the meaning of the degree for this four-year Native American college, prepared as part of the college's self-study for initial accreditation.

*The DTA Final Report: Vision, Action and Commitment: Some Limits*. Center for New Schools, 1979. An analysis of the assumptions behind a \$5 million federal research project on urban school change.

Selection on evaluation in *Beyond the Numbers Game: A Reader in Educational Evaluation*. Macmillan Education Ltd., 1977.

*It Works this Way for Some: Case Studies of Fifteen Schools*, May 1973. Prepared for the Illinois Network of School Development, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, Springfield, Illinois.

*Research for New School Programs: A Guide for Program Planners*. Center for New Schools, July 1973.

In collaboration with other Center for New Schools staff was responsible for the development and writing of over fifty Center for New Schools publications, including

"Strengthening Alternative Schools," *Harvard Educational Review* 42(3), August 1972.  
(List available upon request.)

*The Metro School: A Report on the Progress of Chicago's Experimental School Without Walls.* Chicago, Urban Research Corporation, 1971 (With Donald R. Moore and Richard Johnson).

Editor, Community and Schools, *Harvard Educational Review*, 1969.

*A Problem of Goals: An Attempt at Formative Evaluation for Harvard's Project Upward Bound or Panning for Goals in a Rocky Brook.* Harvard Upward Bound, February 1968.  
A 2-year intense effort to apply new methods of program formative evaluation.

*The Effect of Race and Cross-Race Contact on the Communication of Expectancies.*  
Doctoral Thesis, Harvard University, 1970. Carried out under the tutelage of Dr. Robert Rosenthal.

References available upon request. July 2000.