



Portsmouth High School

Portsmouth

SALT Visit Team Report

October 6, 2000



School Accountability for Learning and Teaching (SALT)

The accountability program of the Rhode Island Department of Education

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This report is available at www.ridoe.net/schoolimprove/salt

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1. THIS REPORT'S PURPOSE AND LIMITS

School Accountability for Learning and Teaching (SALT) is Rhode Island's comprehensive school accountability system. SALT is based on using information to improve learning and teaching so that the learning of all students in the state dramatically improves. The SALT visit and other major SALT components are designed to aid schools in their ongoing development and implementation of effective School Improvement Plans.

The purpose of the visit to Portsmouth High School from October 2-6, 2000 was to draw conclusions about the School in the three focus areas of SALT:

- ◆ Student Learning
- ◆ Teaching
- ◆ The School

The design of the SALT visit ensures that accountability supports improvement of schools by directly connecting judgments of quality and recommendations for improvement to the actual life and work of a school.

This report is built upon the observations and conclusions of the visit team. The visit team is composed of Rhode Island school practitioners and a parent. Their affiliations are included at the end of the report.

The School Improvement Plan for Portsmouth High School was the touchstone document for the team. However informative written reports may be, there is simply no substitute for being at the school while it is in session in the classroom, in the lunchroom, and in the hallways. The specific information generated by a team visit is about how the students, staff and administrators go about their day. Thus, this visit allowed professional colleagues and stakeholders to build informed judgments about the teaching and learning that actually takes place at Portsmouth High School.

The visit team collected its evidence from the following:

- ◆ *a total of 156 full and partial classroom observations which totaled over 128.5 hours of time spent in direct classroom observation. All classrooms were visited at least once. Most teachers were observed more than once.*
- ◆ *many observations of the school (outside of classroom)*
- ◆ *following 10 students for a full day*
- ◆ *observing the work of teachers, specialty teachers and staff for a full day*
- ◆ *scheduled meetings with the following groups:*
 - *School Improvement Team for Portsmouth High School*

- *school and district administrators*
- *students*
- *parents*
- *guidance*
- ◆ *conversations and/or interviews with many students, teachers, department heads, staff, and school administrators*
- ◆ *examination of student work, including a selection of work collected by the school*
- ◆ *analysis of achievement and equity gaps based on Information Works! data*
- ◆ *review of district and school policies*
- ◆ *review of professional development activities*
- ◆ *review of classroom assessments.*
- ◆ *examination of kiosks and displays arranged in team room*
- ◆ *review of the following documents:*
 - *School Improvement Plan for Portsmouth High School*
 - *District Strategic Plan for Portsmouth Public Schools*
 - *1999-2000 SALT Survey report*
 - *classroom textbooks*
 - *2000 Information Works!*
 - *1999 Information Works!*
 - *1998 Information Works!*
 - *1998, 1999 New Standards Reference Examination results*
 - *2000 Rhode Island Writing Assessment results*

- *Futuristics Research Inc. 1999 Alumni Study Portsmouth High School*
- *1996 New England Association of Schools and Colleges Report of the Visiting Team*
- *Certified Staff Evaluation Program*
- *Contractual Agreement between NEA Portsmouth and Portsmouth School Committee 1997-2000*
- *Portsmouth High School School Accountability for Learning and Teaching Team Visitation Handbook*
- *Programmatic and departmental materials and displays prepared for SALT team room.*

The full team has built the conclusions, commendations and recommendations presented here through intense and thorough discussions. The visit team met for a total of 28 hours in eight separate meetings spanning the four days of the visit. This time is exclusive of the time spent in classrooms, with teachers and in meetings with students, parents, and school and district administrators. The team sought to develop conclusions, commendations and recommendations in the three focus areas that, in its judgment, would be helpful to the school as it works to improve teaching and learning.

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

It is important to note that this report reflects a “moment” in the life of the school. The conclusions here are different from those that can be made from statewide assessment data or from information collected and analyzed by members of the school. This report is not intended to be prescriptive. Rather, it is a different lens, one not clouded by the daily life of the school. This new lens is one through which the school can look to help focus on important issues resulting in the development of strategies for overall improvement in the teaching and learning process.

The value of this report is not determined by the hard work of the team. The value will be determined by how Portsmouth High School responds to the report. At first, the critical criteria will be the thoughtfulness of that response and later it will be its actual effectiveness in improving teaching and learning. The response of the faculty and staff will be most critical early on but later there is a shared responsibility to support the school in making progress. The Portsmouth School Department, the citizens of Portsmouth, and the Rhode Island Department of Education will share that responsibility.

It is important to read and consider this report as a whole. Recommendations and commendations should be considered in context with the conclusions. That is the way they were written.

2. PROFILE OF Portsmouth High School

Portsmouth High School serves students in grades 9-12 for the town of Portsmouth, Rhode Island and is one of five schools in the Portsmouth School System. Portsmouth is a suburban town with a population of approximately 17,000. The present school first opened its doors to students in 1959. Additions were added in 1963, 1981, and 2000.

A seven-member school committee whose members are elected to staggered four-year terms governs the Portsmouth Public School District. A town administrator and a seven-member town council govern the town. A superintendent and a district staff of three, as well as a regional special education superintendent administer the school system. Portsmouth High School students are served by a professional staff of 4 administrators, seventy-eight full and part-time faculty, eleven aides and support personnel, and seven custodians.

Of the 824 students attending Portsmouth High School 94 percent are White, .4 percent are Hispanic, 2.7 percent are Asian / Pacific Islander, 1.3 percent are Black, and .1 percent are Native American. Ninety students totaling 10.9 percent receive special education services and 4.5 percent receive free or reduced-price lunch.

The team used the test score information found in *Information Works!* and the 2000 New Standards Reference Exam School Summaries to determine the performance and equity gaps discussed in the student learning conclusions. 2000 New Standards Reference Examination results have been appended to this report. *Information Works!* data for Edward R. Martin Middle School is available at www.ridoe.net.

3. PORTRAIT OF Portsmouth High School AT THE TIME OF THE VISIT

Portsmouth High School is warm comfortable, safe, learning environment for both students and adults. The school is home to highly-motivated, polite, articulate well-behaved students clamoring for challenge in their academic setting. They show a strong desire to learn, are quite respectful of their teachers and classmates, and exhibit a strong sense of pride in their school. The school is staffed by dedicated and caring teachers, staff, and administrators that have fostered this sense of pride and created an atmosphere marked by a sense of community.

This community takes education seriously and has created an educational environment that serves as a strong foundation for student learning. The school is striving for change with high goals in mind. They have recognized several areas of concern and needs which, if adequately addressed, would serve to improve a school which has achieved success and served many of its students well.

Portsmouth High School has undergone a great deal of transition throughout the past year. It recently completed a building program, expanded and upgraded computers and technology, adopted new scheduling software, and set a short-term strategic direction for the school in the form of a School Improvement Plan. While many aspects of students' experiences at Portsmouth High School are exemplary, the school is struggling to become an educational institution that meets the needs of all its students.

Student performance on the New Standards Reference Exams and Rhode Island Writing Assessment suggest a need for educational reforms that would benefit a broader cross section of students. Members of this school are moving forward to initiate programs and services which will foster a teaching and learning environment aimed at high achievement for all students.

Previous efforts and successes with students have built a strong foundation of sound instructional strategies. There is clearly an emergent use of standards-based instructional strategies and performance-based assessments in many facets of this school. Teachers are hard-working, have shown a willingness to change professional practice, and many are working to incorporate new curricula, instructional strategies, and methods of assessment designed to help all students achieve at high levels. Unfortunately, these efforts have been hindered by an unclearly articulated vision and a lack of coordinated, focused professional development at the school and district level.

This learning community has most of the pieces in place to make a good school great. This unique set of circumstances presents this community with a tremendous opportunity to build on the recent changes and improvements through the interpretation of data, broad-based school and community participation, ongoing planning, and job-embedded professional development.

When reading and reflecting upon this report the school and its community should bear in mind, by design, it is not a celebration of all the wonderful things taking place in this school. Rather, this report is a presentation of those items, that in the visiting team's judgement, the school and community must focus on if they are to realize the stated goal of helping all students achieve at high levels.

4. FINDINGS ON STUDENT LEARNING

Sources of Evidence

- ◆ *2000 New Standards English Language Arts Reference Exam School Summary*
- ◆ *2000 New Standards Mathematics Reference Exam School Summary*
- ◆ *2000 Information Works!*
- ◆ *2000 Rhode Island Writing Assessment results*
- ◆ *examination of student work*
- ◆ *following students*
- ◆ *meetings with students, parents, school and district administrators*
- ◆ *conversations and/or interviews with students, staff, teachers, and school administrators*

Conclusions

Examination of student work shows students have a stronger grasp on the conventions of grammar than critical, analytical, and persuasive writing. This corresponds with their performance on the 2000 New Standards English Language Arts Reference Exam. The tenth grade students at Portsmouth High School met or exceeded the standard on the following sub-tests: *Writing Effectiveness* - 30 percent, and *Writing Conventions* - 71 percent. (*2000 New Standards English Language Arts Reference Exam School Summary, examination of student work*)

Students are engaging in mathematical problems and projects that focus on an understanding of concepts and problems solving. In many instances, students' work appeared to exhibit a higher level of proficiency than their performance on the New Standards Mathematics Reference Exam represented. The tenth grade students at Portsmouth High School met or exceeded the standard in the following: *Skills* – 58 percent, *Concepts* – 34 percent, *Problem Solving* - 28 percent. (*2000 New Standards Mathematics Reference Exam School Summary, examination of student work*)

On the 2000 New Standards English Language Arts Reference Exam, the tenth grade students at Portsmouth High School met or exceeded the standard in the following: *Reading Basic Understanding* – 40 percent, *Reading Analysis and Interpretations* – 38 percent. (*2000 New Standards English Language Arts Reference Exam School Summary*)

On the 2000 Rhode Island Writing Assessment, 49 percent of the 10th grade students at Portsmouth High School met or exceeded the standard on this assessment. (*2000 Rhode Island Writing Assessment*)

An equity gap (a difference of 15 percent or greater) exists between regular education and special education students on all sub-tests of the 1999 New Standards Reference Exams reported in *InformationWorks!* No special education students were proficient on the *Reading Analysis and Interpretations* and *Writing*

Effectiveness sub-tests. (2000 *InformationWorks!*)

An equity gap (a difference of 15 percent or greater) exists between male and female students on the *Reading Analysis and Interpretations* and *Writing Effectiveness* sub-tests of the 1999 New Standards Reference Exams reported in *InformationWorks!* Female students scored higher than male students did on both sub-tests. (2000 *InformationWorks!*)

The students at Portsmouth High School are well-behaved, self-motivated, and congenial. They have great pride in their school, admire their teachers, and actively participate in numerous extra-curricular and co-curricular activities. The students at this school are part of a peaceful, supportive, community of learners. (following students, conversations and/or interviews with students, staff, teachers, and school administrators, meetings with students, parents, school and district administrators)

Commendations for Portsmouth High School:

The well-behaved, self-motivated, congenial student body

The high percentage of students participating in a broad variety of extra and co-curricular activities

Students' school pride and sense of community

Recommendations for Portsmouth High School:

Examine the "What Students Need" section of the current and previous New Standards Reference Exam School Summary Reports, look for patterns, and use that information to make changes in the scope and sequence of curricula in all disciplines.

Continue to examine, expand and create appropriate programs and services designed to close gaps in student performance.

Increase the focus and emphasis on both reading basic understanding and analysis and interpretation.

5. FINDINGS ON TEACHING

Sources of Evidence

- ◆ *classroom observations*
- ◆ *observations of the school*
- ◆ *conversations and/or interviews with many students, teachers, and staff*
- ◆ *following students*
- ◆ *scheduled meetings with students and parents*
- ◆ *review of classroom assessments*
- ◆ *examination of student work*
- ◆ *2000 New Standards English Language Arts Reference Exam School Summary*
- ◆ *2000 Rhode Island Writing Assessment*
- ◆ *review of School Improvement Plan for Portsmouth High School*

Conclusions

Clearly, the community has invested substantially in technology to improve students' ability to acquire, analyze, organize and present information. In an attempt to develop both the informational and technological literacy of their students, many teachers are effectively incorporating a variety of technological tools—computers, calculators, and other electronic media—into their instructional practices. However, others have not, thereby limiting sufficient student access to, and understanding of technological applications in all subjects. (*classroom observations, observations of the school, following students, conversations and/or interviews with teachers, staff, and students, meetings with students and parents*)

Many teachers are demonstrating a variety of teaching strategies in their classrooms that foster academic rigor and challenge, and increase the level of students' learning, their application of skills, and their understanding of complex concepts and ideas. These strategies encourage student-to-student learning, provide classroom activities that enable students to apply their knowledge and understanding in the learning process, and require students to be critical and analytical thinkers. Conversely, some teachers are over-utilizing traditional methods of instruction, emphasizing lecture and note-taking, with varying levels of effectiveness and student engagement. This provides fewer opportunities for students to be actively involved in the learning process and engage in meaningful dialogue with teachers and with their peers to develop a deeper understanding of content and concepts. Furthermore, this reduces the opportunities for students to develop good problem solving techniques, engage in independent projects, and become producers versus consumers of knowledge. (*classroom observations, following students, conversations and/or interviews with*

teachers and students)

Most teachers have adopted rubrics as one method of alternative assessment. Some teachers are effectively using rubrics to provide students with clear expectations about performance, clear criteria to self-assess their performance, and detailed, constructive feedback concerning the nature of their strengths and weaknesses. However, a clear understanding of the purpose and proper application of rubrics and other alternative / performance assessments are not evident schoolwide. Some rubrics do not have clear indicators for, nor do they differentiate between / among levels of student proficiency. Sometimes they are simply checklists that are not designed to measure the depth of students' understanding. (*classroom observations, examination of student work, review of classroom assessments, conversations and/or interviews with teachers and students*)

The responsibility to teach writing requires a schoolwide effort. Many teachers, in a variety of disciplines, have placed an emphasis on writing and taken steps to foster good writing. However, on a school-wide basis students have not been given sufficient opportunities to develop and demonstrate their ability to write in a variety of formats for a variety of purposes, audiences, and contexts. (*classroom observations, examination of student work, following students, 2000 New Standards Reference Exam English Language Arts School Summary, 2000 Rhode Island Writing Assessment*)

There is a wide range of types of teacher feedback and assessment in classrooms. There are wonderful examples of both oral and written feedback that provide students with specific suggestions on how to improve their performance. Some teachers help students think aloud, thereby guiding / instructing both the student and his / her peers through the same learning process. On the other hand, too few teachers are providing detailed diagnostic feedback to students that will enable them to revise and improve their work. Furthermore, the predominant method of assessment observed was single-response, short-answer skills-based tests and quizzes. This restricts the type of information teachers have about students' knowledge and understanding, thereby limiting the necessary information they need to make substantive changes in the scope, sequence, and delivery of curricula. (*classroom observations, examination of student work, review of classroom assessments, following students, conversations and/or interviews with teachers and students, meeting with students*)

Commendations for Portsmouth High School:

The dedicated, hard-working, highly-professional teaching staff

The staff's initiative and commitment to improving student performance.

Recommendations for Portsmouth High School:

Increase the amount of detailed annotated comments designed to help students' understand how to improve the quality of their work.

Expand the current focus on writing to include a school-wide emphasis on different genres, coupled with discussions and analysis of writing, in all subject areas.

Increase the school-wide focus on improving students' understanding of concepts, problem solving ability, and other higher order thinking skills.

Provide professional development that focuses on developing standards-based instructional practices and assignments, the use of rubrics, and other performance-based assessments.

Provide additional opportunities for students to become producers of knowledge, and engage in rigorous classroom dialogue with the teachers and each other.

Recommendations for Portsmouth School District:

Provide a structure and requisite supports for all staff to participate in the standards-based professional development experiences outlined above.

6. FINDINGS ON THE SCHOOL

Sources of Evidence

- ◆ *classroom observations*
- ◆ *conversations and interviews with many students, teachers, department heads, and staff*
- ◆ *scheduled meetings with school improvement team, school and district administrators, students, parents, and guidance*
- ◆ *following students*
- ◆ *School Improvement Plan for Portsmouth High School*
- ◆ *District Strategic Plan for Portsmouth Public Schools*
- ◆ *1999-2000 SALT Survey*
- ◆ *Futuristics 1999 Alumni Survey for Portsmouth High School*
- ◆ *review of professional development activities*
- ◆ *1996 New England Association of Schools and Colleges Report of the Visiting Committee*
- ◆ *Examination of Certified Staff Evaluation Program*
- ◆ *review of Contractual Agreement between NEA Portsmouth and Portsmouth School Committee 1997-2000*

Conclusions

There is widespread recognition among faculty members, administrators, students, and parents that constraints within the school day and year inhibit the school's ability to provide programs and services that meet the needs of all students and stakeholders. This has limited the time available for engaging in professional development, planning strategically, writing and aligning curriculum, developing performance-based assessments, setting benchmarks across grade levels, holding after school meetings with various constituents, and offering programs, courses, and services during and after the school day that meet the needs of all students attending Portsmouth High School. (*meetings with students, parents, school improvement team, school administrators and guidance, conversations and/or interviews with teachers, staff, and students, 1999-2000 SALT Survey, review of Contractual Agreement between NEA Portsmouth and Portsmouth School Committee 1997-2000*)

As referenced in its School Improvement Plan, Portsmouth High School has recognized the need to serve "all levels of student ability," and to "close gaps in student performance." A variety of initiatives—a co-teaching inclusive model, an alternative learning program, an integrated departmental course, certification courses,

work-study, increased interdepartmental cooperation, and applied learning projects—all support the school in achieving these goals. A number of programmatic steps have been taken to provide direction and educational preparation for the undecided career/college bound students. These fledgling efforts are a good beginning. However, they are insufficient to serve the academic, technical, and professional needs of all students. This finding coincides with the 1996 New England Association of Schools and Colleges Report of the Visiting Committee. It is evident that there remains a need for the expansion of career programs, services, and systems for all students. Additionally, the breadth of responsibilities carried by the Director of Student Services impedes the effectiveness and immediacy of response to specific areas such as special education. *(conversations and/or interviews with teachers and staff, meetings with school administrators, school improvement team, parents and guidance, classroom observations, review of School Improvement Plan for Portsmouth High, 1999-2000 SALT Survey, Futuristics 1999 Alumni Survey, 1996 New England Association of Schools and Colleges Report of the Visiting Committee)*

Portsmouth High School recently adopted a modified block in an attempt to create a structure that allows teachers to change or vary the nature and type of assignments. This has afforded more opportunities for students to become actively involved in their own learning, engage in independent research, study items in-depth, and participate in activities from beginning to end thereby avoiding task fragmentation. Teachers have utilized this opportunity to varying degrees of effectiveness. *(classroom observations, following students, meetings with School Improvement Team and school administrators, conversations and/or interviews with teachers)*

The present model for professional development allows individual departments and teachers to self-select professional development experiences that are aligned with school improvement goals. Substantial leadership and direction have been provided at the departmental level and many teachers have taken advantage of some opportunities. The lack of a formalized, coordinated plan at the building and district level is hindering the school's attempts to address standards, alternative assessments, changes in instructional practices, and the use of extended class time on a system-wide basis. This limitation was duly noted in the 1996 New England Association of Schools and Colleges Report of the Visiting Committee. Furthermore, tremendous talents and abilities exist on this faculty, but the present school structures and use of time hinder the school's ability to draw on the expertise that exists in this building and to engage the staff in professional growth. *(meetings with school improvement team and school building administrators, conversations and/or interviews with teachers, review of professional development activities, review of School Improvement Plan for Portsmouth High School, 1996 New England Association of Schools and Colleges Report of the Visiting Committee)*

It is clear that the school and district have made positive efforts to formulate programs, to update and revise the written curricula to reflect currently acceptable research and practice, and to restructure time in the schedule in an attempt to address broader student needs. However, there is limited evidence that the school and district have purposefully used the available student performance data and other data sources to make unified, systemic, programmatic, organizational, and instructional changes designed to improve student performance and meet the needs of all students attending Portsmouth High School. *(conversations and/or interviews with teachers, meetings with school and district administrators, review of School Improvement Plan for Portsmouth High School and District Strategic Plan for Portsmouth Public Schools)*

Portsmouth High School formulated a School Improvement Team and with the help of the district completed a School Improvement Plan with objectives, tactics, and timelines. The School Improvement Team has made a concerted effort to chart a direction for the school. This team requires an organizational structure that would support broader participation and involvement of the faculty and community. The work of this team is hindered by the lack of an organizational structure that generates schoolwide supports for implementing the tactics and action plans. *(conversations and/or interviews with teachers, meetings with school improvement team, school and district administrators, review of School Improvement Plan for Portsmouth High School)*

and District Strategic Plan for Portsmouth Public Schools)

The district has recently implemented a new teacher evaluation system that recognizes the need for ongoing professional development. The majority of teachers are currently using the portion of the three-year evaluation cycle to develop and engage in personal professional development activities that are related to the school's goals. Evidence concerning the assessment of tenured teachers' instructional practices and competencies has not yet emerged from the implementation of the instrument. Similarly, it remains unclear how this part of the cycle will be used to improve instruction. (*examination of Certified Staff Evaluation Program, meetings with school and district administrators, conversations and/or interviews with teachers and department heads*)

Commendations for Portsmouth High School:

The development of programs and flexible scheduling to increase students opportunities for learning.

The school's technology, print and electronic media services.

Recommendations for Portsmouth High School:

Expand the resources available for professional development and increase the training surrounding effective strategies for designing and using performance-based assessments, cooperative teaching models, teaching in extended time frames, and standards-based instructional practices.

Form a Professional Development Committee, as required by Article 31, and use this committee to create a school-wide plan for professional development designed to expand the faculty's capacity to implement the school's goals for reform and equitably disperse resources.

Make strong connections between the professional development components of the teachers' evaluation system, the instructional practices desired, mentoring, and how they meet the school's goals and student needs.

Help the School Improvement Team reorganize, clearly define its role, and provide training and on-going support to the team.

Explore additional options, beyond extended periods, to reduce the inflexibility caused by the constraints of time before, during, and after the school day and year.

Research, create, and implement comprehensive School-to-Career systems, services, and experiences necessary to prepare all students to achieve their personal and professional goals.

Create additional supports for the services provided to special education students—including a department head.

Analyze and disaggregate available data and use that to inform future decisions and strategic planning.

Recommendations for Portsmouth School District:

Maximize the contractually available time for professional development, expand and fund additional time, if necessary.

Assist the school in developing and articulating a clear vision for the school's reforms aimed at improving student performance that is aligned with the districts plans for ensuring all children achieve at high levels.

Provide the resources necessary to implement the professional development plan devised at the school level.

7. Final Advice to the School

Portsmouth High School's greatest strengths are its students, teachers, staff, and administrators. It is a fine example of a school that is striving for excellence. There have been a lot of changes for this learning community in the past few years with the construction and furnishing of new facilities and the adoption of new technology and software. These changes have not prevented the school from moving forward on a variety of curricula, instructional and assessment issues designed to improve the quality of teaching and learning at Portsmouth High School.

Good solid instruction and assessment is taking place on many fronts. These sound practices must be expanded to all classrooms and augmented with a broader repertoire of instructional strategies and classroom activities designed to provide students with opportunities to solve problems, apply their knowledge in a variety of contexts, engage in independent work, and learn by actively pursuing their own knowledge.

This learning community has built a solid foundation of rigor and challenge for many students, and is providing an array of services for students to succeed and excel. As you continue your efforts at continuous improvement, research, design, and implement a continuum of programs and services that will serve your "accelerated", "academic", and "basic" students with comparable thoroughness to ensure all students achieve at high levels.

The School Improvement Team has made a concerted effort to chart a direction for the school. Institutionalizing the changes that need to be made depend on a shared vision, commonality of purpose and greater communication, unity, focus, among all parties. This team would benefit from an organizational structure that supports stronger channels of two-way communication between the team and the action teams, and greater involvement from the teachers at this school. Additionally, more active support, by the building administration, for the difficult, time-consuming work of this team would make this team a more efficient agent for change.

Coordinating the professional development experiences of the professional staff will help build the school-wide capacity that the teachers and administrators will need to get the job done. The difficulty will be in finding the balance between meeting the professional development needs of individual staff and ensuring a commonality of experiences necessary to implement the chosen reforms of the school and district in a systematic manner. Build on the considerable talent that exists in this school. Find ways to meet, plan, and learn from those teachers who have already started to make the changes recommended in this report.

The district and community have undertaken an extensive expansion and upgrading of school facilities. The variety of new labs, facilities, and equipment that were made possible by the recent bond has created very positive learning environments in many facets of the school. Presently, some physical plant issues remain unresolved and appropriate instructional space is not universal for current and future programmatic needs. Continue the positive steps you have taken by using the monies from the upcoming bond referendum, if passed, and the local maintenance budget to equitably provide adequate classroom facilities and the equipment needed to implement the chosen curricula and programs of this school community.

As you work with this report and take the next steps to improve the quality of teaching and learning, build on the sense of community and obvious strengths that exist among the students, teachers, and administrators at this school. Work through your School Improvement Team to revise the strategic direction for this school, carefully analyze the data you have available, including this report, and use that analysis to guide the strategic and operational decisions you make in your School Improvement Plan.

The Portsmouth community has much to be proud of in its wonderful student body, hard-working teachers,

staff, and administrators. This school has the potential to become one of the finest schools in the state. In order to make the stated beliefs in the school and district strategic plans a reality, Portsmouth High School will need a clearly articulated vision, a coordinated, concerted effort by the professional staff, and the school and district to provide the requisite supports and structures. Stay the course of reform. You are heading in the right direction to help all students achieve at high levels.

School Improvement Team For Portsmouth High School

Pat McCarthy
Chairperson

Al Alfonso
Educator

Mickey Beebe
Parent/educator

Joy Benson
Guidance counselor

Rita Borgeson
Parent

Sheila Collins
Parent

Brenda Doran
Parent

Elenor Ferri
Department chairperson

Betty Gomes
Director of Student Support Services

Cindy Jilling
Parent/educator

Laura Kasperian,
Student

Robert Littlefield
Principal

Sharon Morrison
Parent

Coleen Raposa
Parent/educator

Melissa Wong
Student

Robert Champion
Teacher

MaryKate Okeefe
Teacher

John Blaess
Assistant principal

Heather Dube
Student

Ryan Osial
Student

Ben Ward
Student

Patricia Ustick
Student

THE SALT VISIT TEAM

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

Chair of the Team

Janice Abatiello
English Teacher
Coventry High School
Coventry, Rhode Island

Roger Boudreau
English Teacher
Lincoln High School
Lincoln, Rhode Island

Margaret DellaBitta
Science Teacher
South Kingstown High School
South Kingstown, Rhode Island

Gerald Furtado
Special Education Teacher
Mt. Hope High School
Bristol-Warren, Rhode Island

Edward Kanaczet
Teacher
Newport Career and Technical Center
Newport, Rhode Island

Elisabeth Newman
Head Teacher
Reynolds School
Bristol-Warren, Rhode Island

Steve Gardner
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Exeter-West Greenwich High School
Exeter-West Greenwich, Rhode Island

Linda Ann Pontes
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Dana Ramey
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Middletown High School
Middletown, Rhode Island

New Standards Reference Examination and RI Writing Assessment Results (2000)

Catalpa Ltd. Endorsement of SALT Visit Team Report

Portsmouth High School

October 6, 2000

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

1. This report was produced by a legitimate SALT Visit that was led by a trained SALT Visit Chair and conducted in a manner that is consistent with SALT Visit procedures.
2. The conclusions and all other content of this report meet the criteria specified for a SALT Visit report.

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



Thomas A. Wilson, EdD

Catalpa Ltd.

October 26, 2000