

Selected Rhode Island Schools

Case Studies of SALT Survey Improvement Indicators

by Anne M. Seitsinger, Stephen Brand, and Amy Hupkau



Prepared for the
Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
by the National Center on Public Education and Social Policy,
Robert D. Felner, Director and Principal Investigator,

Anne M. Seitsinger, Acting Director
University of Rhode Island, Kingston, Rhode Island.



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Preface

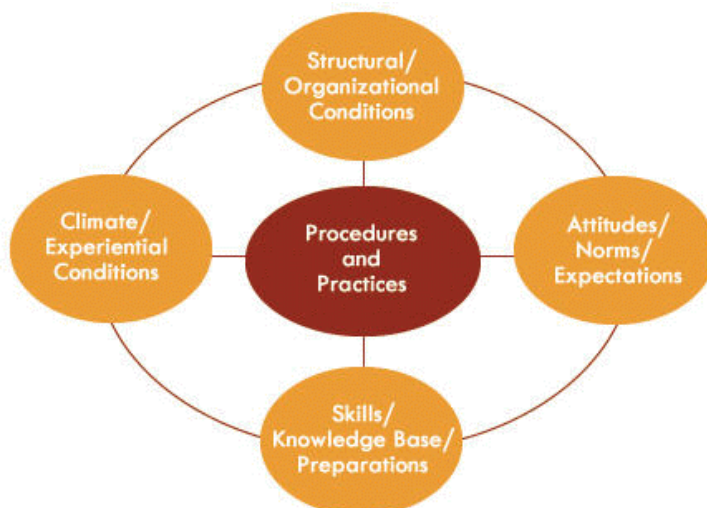
This report contains case studies of eight Rhode Island schools that Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education identified as having made significant improvements in 2004 in student achievement in English language arts and mathematics as measured by the New Standards Reference Examinations. For each school, we examined reports from teachers, students, and parents on the SALT Survey. We analyzed these reports using the *HiPlaces Model*, a two-level model for examining the implementation and ongoing refinement of reform efforts designed to ensure that all children achieve at high levels (Felner, et al, 2001a). The first level of the model identifies nine research-based dimensions common to high performing schools. These interconnected dimensions are:

The 9 Dimensions Common to High Performing Schools



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The second level of the model analyzes each of these dimensions using the five cross-cutting components.



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Prior research revealed “the presence of higher levels of standards-and-research based (SRB) practices, as assessed by the SALT Survey, in schools is significantly related to higher levels of student performance and achievement on the New Standards Reference Examinations. That is, when teachers in a school report high levels of SRB instruction more students tend to score at or above proficient level on the NSRE in their school” (Felner, et al., 2001b).

The eight case studies are presented using a similar format. First, the introduction to the school includes **structural/organizational conditions**, such as its grade level and location, number of teachers and students, as well as a brief description of several student demographic characteristics. Next, we present a bulleted list of highlights from the school’s SALT Survey data. This is followed by specific information examined through the lens of the cross-cutting components of the *HiPlaces Model*. Each case study includes information organized into sections labeled:

- **Attitudes/norms/expectation**
- **Skills/knowledge base/preparation**
- **Climate/experiential conditions**
- **Procedures and practices**

In addition, each case study includes an outcomes section and a student achievement history that delineates the school’s previous classifications and the spring 2004 student proficiency performance on each of the subtests of the NSRE in English language arts and mathematics .

To acquire a better understanding of the factors that are linked to gains in student achievement, we compared each of the schools in this report with schools that did not exhibit gains in student achievement. Specifically, we compared each of the eight featured schools to non-improving schools whose student population had a similar composition in terms of student poverty, minority racial/ethnic group membership, special education status, and participation in English as a Second Language instruction. The present report focuses on areas in which the improving schools showed increases in attitudes, skills, climate, and practices that have been shown to contribute to students’ learning. These increases in the eight improving schools were not characteristic of the matched comparison schools. This pattern of results gives us more confidence that the improvements in attitudes, skills, climate, and practices found in these improving schools may have contributed to gains in students’ achievement.

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Table of Contents

| | |
|--|--------------------|
| Preface | i |
| Agnes B. Hennessey School | 1 |
| Carey Elementary School | 4 |
| Charles Fortes Magnet Academy | 7 |
| Potter-Burns School | 10 |
| Social Street School | 13 |
| Thornton School | 16 |
| N. A. Ferri Middle School | 19 |
| Exeter-West Greenwich Regional High School | 23 |

**Agnes B. Hennessey School
East Providence, RI**

Summary of SALT Survey Indicators

Agnes B. Hennessey School is 1 of 10 elementary schools in East Providence. This school has 19 teachers serving almost 300 students in grades K-5 with 50% of students eligible for free/reduced price lunch, 15% receiving special education services, and 14% receiving services relating to Limited English Proficiency.

Highlights:

- Positive attitudes toward educational practices
- High levels of classroom instructional practices continue, with an increase in Standards-based Practices for Numeracy
- The school and classroom climate remain positive
- Fewer barriers to the implementation of school accountability
- Parents supportive of the school
- Teachers and students report feeling much more safe

Attitudes/Norms/Expectations

- Teacher reports of their attitudes toward most educational practices remained positive.

- Teachers report having high expectations for all students.

- Teachers report fewer barriers to the implementation of school accountability, although they still report a lack of professional development opportunities, difficulty obtaining release time for professional development, and a lack of materials and resources necessary for adequate implementation were moderate to major problems.

- More parents report positive feelings toward the school. Over 90% of parents reported that they felt this school views them as important partners.

Skills/Knowledge Base/Preparation

- Teachers reported similar levels of participation in professional development activities across the years. They reported participating in most types of activities only once a year or never, with the exception of exchanging lessons plans with colleagues quarterly.

- Addressing students' different learning needs seems to be the current focus of additional staff development wanted/needed.

Top Five Additional Staff Development Wanted/Needed

| Rank | 2003-2004 | 1997-1998 |
|------|--|--|
| 1 | Working with families to involve them in education | Using computers as part of instruction |

| Rank | 2003-2004 | 1997-1998 |
|------|--|--|
| 2 | Working with "at risk" students | Identifying and referring students in need of health and social services |
| 3 | Enrichment activities for students in content areas | Developmentally appropriate instructional methods |
| 4 | Inclusion of special education students into regular classes | Working with "at risk" students |
| 5 | Tailoring instruction to student learning styles | Teaching to new national standards in your subject area (e.g., NCTM Standards) |

- Additionally, teachers have reported being more familiar with standards in their content areas. While in 1998, only 18% of teachers reported being very familiar with standards, in 2004, 44% of teachers reported being very familiar. While this is an improvement, the goal may be to have 100% of teachers being very familiar with the content standards they are teaching.

Climate/Experiential Conditions

- School and classroom climates remain positive, with teachers reporting students are less disruptive. Furthermore, they reported higher levels of agreement with the quality of their team/grade-level interactions, particularly team decision making and group cohesiveness/harmony.
- Teachers and students report feeling much more safe at school this year than before.

Procedures and Practices

- Significant increases in the levels at which teachers worked together on curriculum coordination, coordination of student assignments, assessments, and feedback, and parent contact, as well as sustaining the frequency with which they contacted other building resource staff can be seen in teacher reports from 1998 to 2004. This is especially evident in their focus on the development of performance standards and coordination of student assignments. Significantly more integrated units were implemented in 2003 and 2004 than in 1998 and these units have a greater emphasis on reading and mathematics skill development.
- Teachers at Agnes B. Hennessey School have also increased their efforts to contact with parents, most often regarding homework to do with students.
- Across the board, the frequency of most classroom practices have continued to be implemented on a weekly basis on average. In addition, teachers reported increased levels of classroom instruction related to Small Group Active Instruction and Standards-based Practices for Numeracy.

Outcomes

- The school and classroom climate is positive, according to both teachers and students.
- Student achievement in English language arts and mathematics has improved.

Student Achievement History

| <u>Year</u> | <u>School Classification</u> |
|-------------|--|
| 2000-2001 | Moderately Performing/Not improving |
| 2001-2002 | Moderately Performing/Not improving |
| 2002-2003 | Moderately Performing/Sustaining |
| | <u>Percent of students who achieved or achieved with honors (change from 2003)</u> |
| 2003-2004 | Math Skills 85% (-2%) Reading Basic Understanding 79% (+11%) |
| | Math Concepts 66% (+21%) Reading Analysis and Interpretation 65% (+6%) |
| | Math Problem Solving 62% (+30%) Writing Effectiveness 88% (+31%) |
| | Writing Conventions 79% (+11%) |

Carey Elementary School Newport, RI

Summary of SALT Survey Indicators

The Carey Elementary School is 1 of 6 elementary schools in the district of Newport. The school has 11 teachers serving 219 students in grades KG-5, with 48% of students eligible for free/reduced price lunch, 20% receiving special education services, and 19% receiving services relating to Limited English Proficiency.

Highlights:

- High levels of teacher “buy-in” for school improvement
- At the Carey Elementary School, addressing students’ individual needs has become an area on which much emphasis is placed. This is evidenced in:
 - Positive teacher attitudes, particularly toward Heterogeneous Grouping
 - High levels of requested professional development in issues regarding inclusion
 - High levels of Small Group Instruction and decreases in Traditional Practices
 - Parents’ feelings toward the school are more positive than in previous years
 - Teachers hold high expectations of students’ academic potential
 - Increased amounts of teacher training in content standards and standards-based instruction
 - Elevated levels of grade-level curriculum coordination practices.
 - Teachers report high job satisfaction ratings
 - Improvements in student achievement in English language arts and mathematics this year
 - More students are reading books

Attitudes/Norms/Expectations

- Positive changes in teacher and student attitudes are evident in this school’s SALT Survey data.
- Teachers at the Carey Elementary School have “bought in” to the school improvement process. From 1998 to 2004, staff response rates have increased.
- Consistently, and across years, teachers agree to strongly agree that classroom practices such as heterogeneous grouping, integration, and inclusion are essential to effective education in the grade levels they teach. Teacher attitudes toward addressing students’ individual needs has increased and is particularly positive.
- Teachers report having high expectations of students academic potential. They rated 95% of grade 4 students as capable of going on to post-secondary schools in 2004. In 1998, they rated only 70% of grade 4 students as capable of going on to post-secondary schools. Students self- expectations of going on to post-secondary schools have also increased since 1998.
- Teachers report fewer barriers to the implementation of school accountability, especially regarding professional development. In 1998, 56% of the teachers felt that a lack of adequate

professional development time was a moderate to major problem and 58% reported that a lack of preparation and professional development in national or state standards in their area was a moderate to major problem. By 2004, these percentages dropped to 30% and 23%, respectively. Adequate time for planning and insufficient resources remains a concern (80% of teachers report each of these areas to be a moderate to major problem).

- Parents' feelings toward the school are also more positive. For example in 1998, 57% of parents reported that the school does a good job of informing them how their child is doing in school. In 2004, this percentage increased to 73%. In 1998, 74% of parents reported they believed that teachers care about their children. By 2004, this percentage increased to 85%.

Skills/Knowledge Base/Preparation

- The types of additional staff development wanted/needed has also changed somewhat in its focus. Teachers in 2004 most requested more staff development focused on reading skill development and inclusion issues. Staff also feel need for more professional development in both the philosophy and models of reform in which the Carey Elementary School is participating and multi-cultural education. In 1998, the most focus was placed on using computers as part of instruction.

- Training in standards has also increased from 16% to 31% of teachers reporting that they have received much to very much training in their primary content area.

Top Five Additional Staff Development Wanted/Needed

| Rank | 2003-2004 | 1997-1998 |
|------|--|--|
| 1 | Inclusion of special education students into regular classrooms | Using computers as part of instruction |
| 2 | Reading skill development | Strategies for teaching broad range ability levels in the same classroom; Active, "hands-on" learning (<i>tied for 2nd</i>) |
| 3 | Philosophy and models of reform in which your school is participating; Multi-cultural education (<i>tied for 3rd</i>) | Working with "at risk" students |
| 4 | | Inclusion of special education students into regular classrooms; Reading Skill Development; |
| 5 | Standards-based curricula and assessment | Developmental characteristics of students in my grade level (<i>tied for 4th</i>) |

Climate/ Experiential Conditions

- Overall, teachers report that they feel there are almost always positive work and classroom climates at the Carey Elementary School. Teacher ratings of staff recognition, commitment,

and the organization and clarity of expectations, for example, have improved since the baseline year and were given very high ratings.

- Students report high levels of school safety. In fact, every measure of student-reported school safety has improved at the Carey Elementary School since the baseline year. Illustratively, 97% of students report never bring protection to school; 100% report never being offered drugs in school; and 96% report never experiencing actual violence by a student at school.

Procedures and Practices

- Teachers increased the levels at which they worked on small group active instruction, authentic instruction, and especially reading skill enhancement, and mathematics reasoning and skill enhancement. Of particular interest, teachers reported that in 2004 they implement traditional practices less frequently than in 1998.
- Teachers increased the levels at which they worked together on many team/ grade-level practices. Specifically, in 2004 they worked more on curriculum coordination, coordination of student assignments, assessments, and feedback, as well as sustaining the frequency with which they contacted parents and other building resource staff.

Outcomes

- The focused efforts by the Carey Elementary School have resulted in a number of positive school improvements in peer interactions, school climate, and student adjustment and achievement.
- Teachers report high job satisfaction ratings. Specifically, teachers at the Carey Elementary School reported improvement in their satisfaction with student behavior, job evaluation, and feedback and input into decision making.
- More students are reading books, up from 81% in 1998 to 97% in 2004.
- Improvements in student achievement in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics

Student Achievement History

| <u>Year</u> | <u>School Classification</u> | |
|-------------|--|--|
| 2000-2001 | Low Performing/ Improving in ELA | |
| 2001-2002 | Low Performing/ Improving in Math | |
| 2002-2003 | School in Need of Improvement/Making Insufficient Progress | |
| | <u>Percent of students who achieved or achieved with honors (change from 2003)</u> | |
| 2003-2004 | Math Skills, 68% (+27%) | Reading Basic Understanding, 68% (+13%) |
| | Math Concepts, 33% (+17%) | Reading Analysis and Interpretation, 49% (+1%) |
| | Math Problem Solving, 18% (same) | Writing Effectiveness, 73% (+20%) |
| | | Writing Conventions, 54% (+9%) |

Charles Fortes Magnet Academy Providence, RI

Summary of SALT Survey Indicators

Charles Fortes Magnet Academy is 1 of 32 elementary schools in the district of Providence. It is a large elementary school with 43 teachers serving 590 students in grades KG-6, with 92% of students eligible for free/reduced price lunch, 14% receiving special education services, and 31% receiving services relating to Limited English Proficiency.

Highlights:

- High levels of teacher “buy-in” for school improvement
- Positive teacher attitudes, especially fo reading skill development and integration across the curriculum
- Improvements in school’s communication with parents
- Teachers hold high expectations of students’ academic potential
- More professional development for teachers with a focus on developmental characteristics of students in their grade levels and strategies to promote active, hands-on learning
- Teachers have made great strides in the classroom practices of reading skill enhancement and mathematics sill enhancement. Students receive reading and writing skill instruction daily.
- These practices are yielding results: Improvements made this year in student achievement in ELA and mathematics
- Teachers and students consistently report positive overall school and classroom climate
- More students are reading books

Attitudes/Norms/Expectations

- Positive changes in teacher and student attitudes are evident in this school’s SALT Survey data.
- Teachers at Charles Fortes Magnet Academy have “bought in” to the school improvement process. From 2001 to 2004, staff response rates have been high.
- Consistently, and across years, teachers agree to strongly agree that classroom practices such as heterogeneous grouping, integration, and inclusion are essential to effective education in the grade levels they teach. Teacher attitudes toward reading skill development and integration across the curriculum remain particularly positive.
- Teachers report having high expectations of students academic potential. They rated 70% of grade 4 students as capable of going on to post-secondary schools in 2004. Students self-expectations of going on to post-secondary schools have also increased 1998.
- Teachers report fewer barriers to the implementation of school accountability, especially regarding professional development. In 1998, 45% of the teachers felt that a lack of adequate professional development time was a moderate to major problem and 60% reported that

difficulties in obtaining release time for planning and professional development was a moderate to major problem. By 2004, these percentages dropped to 12% and 27%, respectively. Adequate time for planning remains a concern.

- Parent believe that this school has improved in many aspects of communication with home. For example in 2004, the school's efforts to explain homework, send home news about what is going on at school, and give information on how report card grades are earned improved by at least 10 percentage points from 1998.

Skills/Knowledge Base/Preparation

- The types of additional staff development wanted/needed has also changed somewhat in its focus. Teachers in 2004 most requested more staff development focused on reading skill development. Staff also feel need for more professional development in the developmental characteristics of students in their grade levels and strategies to promote active hands-on learning. In 1998 there was a focus on criterion referenced lesson plan development and outcome base curricula and assessment.
- Teachers report being more familiar with standards in their content areas. While in 1998, only about 52% of teachers being very familiar with standards, in 2004 65% of teachers reported being very familiar. Training in standards has also increased from 19% to 34% of teachers reporting having received much to very much training in their primary content area.

Top Five Additional Staff Development Wanted/Needed

| Rank | 2003-2004 | 1997-1998 |
|------|--|--|
| 1 | Reading skill development | Using computers as part of instruction |
| 2 | Using computers as part of instruction | Strategies for teaching broad range ability levels in the same classroom |
| 3 | Inclusion of special education students into regular classrooms; Strategies for teaching broad range ability levels in the same classroom (<i>tied for 3rd</i>) | Inclusion of special education students into regular classrooms |
| 4 | | Criterion referenced lesson plan development |
| 5 | Developmental characteristics of students in my grade level; Active hands-on learning (<i>tied for 5th</i>) | Outcome base curricula and assessment |

Climate/ Experiential Conditions

- Students report high levels of school safety. Illustratively, 100% of students report never bring protection to school; 98% report never experiencing theft or robbery in school; and 85% report never experiencing actual violence by a student at school.

Procedures and Practices

- Teachers increased the levels at which they worked on small group active instruction, authentic instruction, and especially reading skill enhancement, and mathematics reasoning and skill enhancement. Of particular interest, teachers reported that students receive reading and writing skill instruction daily.
- Examination of team and grade level practices reveal that teams and grade levels work together to contact/involve parents and develop performance standards at least monthly.

Outcomes

- The focused efforts by Charles Fortes Magnet Academy have resulted in a number of positive school improvements in peer interactions, school climate, and student adjustment and achievement.
- Regularly scheduled parent-teacher (P-T) conferences are held more often. In 1998, 60% of teachers reported these conferences were held only once a year or less. In 2004, 50% reported meeting once a year, another 25% reported meeting twice a year, and 25% reported they meet 4 times a year with parents at scheduled meetings. In 2004, more parents attended P-T conferences. In 1998, 55% of classroom teachers reported more than half the parents of their students attend P-T conferences. In 2004, 81% of teachers reported this level of parent participation at regularly scheduled conferences.
- The school work climate and classroom climate are generally positive, according to both teachers and students.
- Student adjustment indicators: Students, on average, reported low depression, few behavior problems, and high levels of self esteem.
- In addition, more students are reading books, up from 71% in 1998 to 95% in 2004.

Student Achievement History

| <u>Year</u> | <u>School Classification</u> |
|-------------|--|
| 2000-2001 | Low Performing/ Improving in ELA and Math |
| 2001-2002 | Low Performing/ Improving in Math |
| 2002-2003 | School in Need of Improvement/Making Insufficient Progress |
| | <u>Percent of students who achieved or achieved with honors (change from 2003)</u> |
| 2003-2004 | Math Skills, 62% (+16%) Reading Basic Understanding, 51% (+14%) |
| | Math Concepts, 46% (+33%) Reading Analysis and Interpretation, 42% |
| | Math Problem Solving, 43% (+32%) (+19%) Writing Effectiveness, 63% (+29%) |
| | Writing Conventions, 39% (+17%) |

Potter-Burns School
Pawtucket, RI

Summary of SALT Survey Indicators

Potter-Burns School is one of ten elementary schools in the Pawtucket school district. It is a large elementary school with 25 teachers serving over 580 students in grades K-6, with 62% of students eligible for free/reduced price lunch, 23% receiving special education services, and 0% receiving services relating to Limited English Proficiency.

Highlights:

- Increasingly positive teacher attitudes toward school improvement and changes in instructional practices
- Reductions in barriers to implementation related to planning time, scheduling, professional development, and support for a clear vision for school improvement
- Marked increases in a wide variety of professional development activities
- Increased familiarity with content standards.
- Marked increases in teacher decision-making
- Improvements in teachers' work climate
- Improvements in the quality of collaborative work performed by teams of teachers
- High expectations for all students
- Greater efforts by teachers to engage parents in their children's education, with more regular contact between teachers and parents
- Teams of teachers working together more often on the integration of the curriculum and coordination of instructional activities
- Substantial improvements in classroom instruction with increased use of a wide variety of instructional practices that support students' achievement
- Improvements in student achievement in ELA and mathematics

Attitudes/Norms/Expectations

- Teachers have increasingly positive attitudes towards a wide range of critically important educational practices. Between 1998 and 2004, teachers reported more positive attitudes towards practices related to citizenship and social competence, heterogeneous ability grouping, health instruction, parent outreach, mastery-based instruction and assessment, inclusion, attention to students' developmental needs, community-based learning opportunities, and integration of mathematics skills development across the curriculum.
- Teachers also report fewer barriers to the implementation of school accountability. In 1998, almost all of the teachers indicated that lack of adequate team planning time was a major or moderate problem. In 2004, only one in ten indicated that lack of planning time was a problem. In 1998, almost all of the teachers indicated that lack of professional development time, difficulties in obtaining release time for professional development, and the range of professional development opportunities were significant barriers to implementation. By 2004, fewer than half of the teachers indicated that professional development time was a major or moderate problem, and one in four teachers indicated that release time and the range of professional development opportunities were problematic. In 1998, more than two-thirds of the teachers indicated that doubts about the effectiveness of the practices that they were

being asked to implement, lack of scheduling flexibility, lack of clear expectations for teachers, and lack of staff involvement in the decision to reform the school were major or moderate problems. More than half of the teachers felt that lack of training for teachers and lack of a developed curriculum were salient problems. By 2004, across the board, a much smaller proportion of teachers indicate that the areas identified above were barriers to the implementation of school reform.

Skills/Knowledge Base/Preparation

- Teachers' participation in professional development activities has increased considerably between 1998 and 2004. In 1998, teachers reported that they engaged in workshops held by their school or district, and exchanges of lesson plans about once a year. All other forms of professional development happened less than once a year or not at all. By contrast, in 2004, teachers reported that they exchanged lesson plans about once a month, participated in workshops, classroom visits, and training in teaching to state standards several times a year, and engaged in many other forms of professional development about once a year.

- Teachers have reported being somewhat more familiar with standards in their content areas. While in 1998, only about 17% of teachers reported being very familiar with standards, in 2004, 47% of teachers reported being very familiar. Training in standards has also increased: ratings went from 3% to 26% of teachers reporting having received much to very much training in their primary content area.

Climate/Experiential Conditions

- Teacher report shifts in decision making. In 2004, teachers report markedly higher levels of autonomy and participation in decision-making, as well as decreased levels of centralization. Teachers report that they had more authority over practices and policies that affect their grade level as well as ones that concern the school as a whole. They also report that the schools' building committee had greater influence in school-wide goal setting and management.

- Teachers' reports of work climate have improved with regard to the organization and clarity of expectations, perceived teacher commitment to school improvement, and recognition of teachers' work.

- Teachers report marked improvements in the work that they undertake with other teachers at their grade level. They report higher levels of cohesion with their colleagues and greater readiness for collaboration and teamwork. Teachers report improvements in the quality of interdisciplinary linkages in instruction, student assessments, attending to the needs of individual students. Teachers also report having higher standards for all students and placing more emphasis on cultural pluralism in their classrooms.

Procedures and Practices

- Marked changes in instructional practices have taken place at this school. Teachers greatly increased the levels at which they worked together on curriculum coordination, coordination of student assignments, assessments, and feedback, as well as an increase in the frequency with which they contacted other building resource staff.

- Across the board, increases in the frequency of most classroom practices were reported by teachers. Between 1998 and 2003-2004, teachers markedly increased their use of practices related to Small Group Active Instruction, Integration and Interdisciplinary Practices, Practices for Heterogeneous Ability Groups, Authentic Instruction, Health Instruction, Citizenship and Social Competence, Critical Thinking Enhancement, Practices for the Enhancement of Skills in Mathematics and Reading, and Integration of Literacy Resources. Teachers also report using interdisciplinary and thematic units more frequently, and for longer periods of time in 2004 compared with 1998.
- Teachers report marked increases in their collaborative efforts with other teachers to reach parents and to increase their involvement in the education of their children. In particular, teachers increased attention to the progress of individual students, and referrals for health and social services. Teachers report consistently high attendance at parent-teacher conferences. In 2004, markedly more parents reported that they had visited their child's classroom.

Outcomes

- Between 2003 and 2004, students showed marked gains in the New Standards Reference Examination tests in Math and English language arts (ELA), as shown in the table below.

Student Achievement History

| <u>Year</u> | <u>School Classification</u> |
|-------------|--|
| 2000-2001 | Moderately Performing/Improving in Mathematics |
| 2001-2002 | Moderately Performing/Improving in ELA and Math |
| 2002-2003 | Moderately Performing/Sustaining |
| | <u>Percent of students who achieved or achieved with honors (change from 2003)</u> |
| 2003-2004 | Math Skills 75% (+13%), Reading Basic Understanding 54% (+17%) |
| | Math Concepts 53% (+17%), Reading Analysis and Interpretation 51% (+20%) |
| | Math Problem Solving 50% (+18%) Writing Effectiveness 56% (+20%) |
| | Writing Conventions 72% (+4%) |

Social Street School Woonsocket, RI

Summary of SALT Survey Indicators

Social Street School is 1 of 11 elementary schools in Woonsocket. It is a small elementary school with 14 teachers serving over 230 students in grades Pre-K-5 with 85% of students eligible for free/reduced price lunch, 26% receiving special education services, and 11% receiving services relating to Limited English Proficiency.

Highlights:

- High teacher mobility
- Positive changes in teacher, student, and parent attitudes toward the school
- Professional development focused on reading skill development and mathematics
- Maintained high levels of contact with parents
- Higher expectations of students
- Greater focus on performance standards and the integration of the curriculum
- Across the board, increases in the frequency of most classroom practices, particularly in Standards-based Practices for Literacy Instruction and Numeracy
- More students are reading books
- The efforts by Social Street School have resulted in a number of positive school improvements in peer interactions, school climate, and student adjustment and achievement.

Attitudes/Norms/Expectations

- Positive changes in teacher, student, and parent attitudes are evident in this school's SALT Survey data.

- Teacher reports of their attitudes toward most educational practices are increasingly positive.

- Teachers report having high expectations for all students. Teachers rated about 80% of students had the academic potential to go beyond high school, up from approximately 35% in 2000. Students seem to perceive this change, with their perception of their teachers views of their academic expectation aligning with those of their parents.

- Teachers reported fewer barriers to the implementation of school accountability. Lack of time necessary for adequate planning and/or implementation was still viewed as a moderate problem by about half the teachers. Lack of support from the parent-teacher association and the state education agency were the only other areas that seem to pose problems for these teachers.

- More parents report positive feelings toward the school. Over 90% of parents reported that they felt this school views them as important partners.

Skills/Knowledge Base/Preparation

- High teacher mobility exists at Social Street School and has over the past few years. Approximately 2/3 of the teachers were new to the school and new to the grade level they were teaching in 2003-2004. This pattern is similar for the proportion of new teachers to the school for several years.
- Teachers report greater participation in more professional development activities in 2004. While in 1998, they reported participating in most types of activities only once a year or never, in 2004, more teachers reported exchanging lessons plans with colleagues on average more than monthly and participating in workshops quarterly, and staff development at their school several times a year or more.
- The types of additional staff development wanted/needed has also broadened to include the specific areas of reading and mathematics.

Top Five Additional Staff Development Wanted/Needed

| Rank | 2003-2004 | 1997-1998 |
|------|--|--|
| 1 | Reading skill development | Developmentally appropriate instructional methods |
| 2 | Strategies for teaching broad range ability levels in the same classroom | Alternative/authentic assessment practices |
| 3 | Working with "at risk" students | Strategies for teaching broad range ability levels in the same classroom |
| 4 | Integration of mathematical reasoning and concepts throughout the curriculum | Working with "at risk" students |
| 5 | Developmentally appropriate instructional methods | Active, "hands-on" learning |

- Additionally, teachers have reported being much more familiar with standards in their content areas. While in 1998, only 40% of teachers reported being very familiar with standards, in 2004, 100% of teachers reported being very familiar. Training in standards has also increased: ratings went from 7% to 33% of teachers reporting having received much to very much training in their primary content area.

Climate/Experiential Conditions

- Teachers report positive shifts in decision making. They reported greater levels of autonomy and less centralization of decision-making. They also reported having greater influence in school-wide goal setting. Furthermore, they reported higher levels of agreement with the quality of their team/grade-level interactions and cultural pluralism.

Procedures and Practices

- Significant increases in the levels at which teachers worked together on curriculum coordination, coordination of student assignments, assessments, and feedback, as well as sustaining the frequency with which they contacted parents and other building resource staff can be seen in teacher reports from 1998 to 2004. This is especially evident in their focus on performance standards and the integration of the curriculum. More integrated units were implemented in 2004 than in 1998 and these units have a greater emphasis on reading and mathematics skill development.
- Teachers at Social Street School have maintained high levels of contact with parents.
- Across the board, increases in the frequency of most classroom practices were reported by teachers, often from an average of several times a month to weekly or more. Most notably, is the increased levels of classroom instruction related to Standards-based Practices for Literacy Instruction and Numeracy.

Outcomes

- The efforts by Social Street School have resulted in a number of positive school improvements in peer interactions, school climate, and student adjustment and achievement.
- Regularly scheduled parent-teacher (P-T) conferences are held more often. In 1998, 71% of teachers reported these conferences were held twice a year. In 2004, 100% reported holding meetings at least twice a year. The percentage of students' parents attending P-T conferences has not changed, but a higher percentage of teachers meet each week with parents to discuss student needs or concerns.
- The school work climate is significantly more positive according to teachers. The classroom climate is positive, according to both teachers and students.
- In addition, more students are reading books, up from 84% in 1998 to 95% in 2004.
- Student achievement in English language arts and mathematics has improved.

Student Achievement History

| <u>Year</u> | <u>School Classification</u> |
|-------------|--|
| 2000-2001 | Low Performing/Not improving |
| 2001-2002 | Low Performing/Not improving |
| 2002-2003 | In Need of Improvement/Making Progress |
| | <u>Percent of students who achieved or achieved with honors (change from 2003)</u> |
| 2003-2004 | Math Skills 70% (+16%) Reading Basic Understanding 82% (+20%) |
| | Math Concepts 36% (+25%) Reading Analysis and Interpretation 67% (+13%) |
| | Math Problem Solving 27% (+19%) Writing Effectiveness 76% (+17%) |
| | Writing Conventions 58% (+29%) |

**Thornton School
Johnston, RI**

Summary of SALT Survey Indicators

Thornton School is one of seven elementary schools in Johnston. It is a small elementary school with 23 teachers serving over 255 students in grades 1-5 with 38% of students eligible for free/reduced price lunch and 32% receiving special education services.

Highlights:

- School-based professional development activities have increased.
- The types of additional staff development wanted/needed has also broadened to include addressing students' different learning needs.
- Increased levels of classroom instruction related to Cross-content Area Standards-based Practices and Authentic Instruction which have gone, on average, from monthly to weekly.
- The school work climate and the classroom climate remain positive and, in some instances, more positive.
- More students are reading books
- Student achievement in ELA and mathematics has improved, particularly on assessments requiring higher level thinking skills.

Attitudes/Norms/Expectations

- Positive changes in teacher, student, and parent attitudes are evident in this school's SALT Survey data.
- Teacher reports of their attitudes toward most educational practices remain positive, and increasingly so toward practices of Inclusion and Community-based Learning Opportunities.
- Teachers report having high expectations for all students. In 2004, teachers rated about 75% of students had the academic potential to go beyond high school, up from approximately 60% in 1998.
- Teachers reported similar problems with barriers to the implementation of school accountability. Lack of professional development opportunities and planning time continue to be viewed as moderate to major problems by more than half the teachers. Lack of support from the school district and the state education agency were also areas that seem to pose problems for these teachers.
- Parents report positive feelings toward the school. Approximately 85% of parents reported that they felt this school views them as important partners.

Skills/Knowledge Base/Preparation

- For each of the past 6 years, approximately 1/3 of the teachers reported they were relatively new to the school, having taught at Thornton School for 3 years or less.
- Teachers report slightly greater participation in more professional development activities in 2004. While in 1998, they reported participating in most types of activities only once a year

or never, in 2004, more teachers reported exchanging lessons plans with colleagues on average quarterly and participating in workshops several times a year.

- The types of additional staff development wanted/needed has also broadened to include addressing students' different learning needs.

Top Five Additional Staff Development Wanted/Needed

| Rank | 2003-2004 | 1997-1998 |
|------|--|---|
| 1 | Working with families to involve them in education | Using computers as part of instruction |
| 2 | Working with "at risk" students | Teaching to new national standards in your subject area (e.g., NCTM Standards) |
| 3 | Strategies for teaching broad range ability levels in the same classroom | Reading skill development |
| 4 | Reading skill development | Involving community resources and settings in education; Alternative/authentic assessment practices; Mastery learning techniques; |
| 5 | Teaching to new national standards in your subject area (e.g., NCTM Standards) | Integration of mathematical reasoning and concepts throughout the curriculum (<i>tied for 4th</i>) |

- Additionally, teachers have reported being more familiar with standards in their content areas. While in 1998, only 11% of teachers reported being very familiar with standards, in 2004, 44% of teachers reported being very familiar. Training in standards has also increased: ratings went from 10% to 24% of teachers reporting having received much to very much training in their primary content area.

Climate/Experiential Conditions

- Teachers reported fluctuations in their level of involvement in decision making at the building level across the years. Within their team/grade-level, they reported higher levels of agreement with the quality of interactions and cultural pluralism.

Procedures and Practices

- Significant increases in the levels at which teachers worked together on curriculum coordination, coordination of student assignments, assessments, and feedback, contact parents and other building resource staff can be seen in teacher reports from 1998 to 2004. This is especially evident in their focus on performance standards. More integrated units were implemented in 2004 than in 1998 and these units have an emphasis on reading and mathematics skill development.
- Across the board, the frequency of most classroom practices were reported by teachers remained about the same, often from an average of several times a month to weekly or more. Most notably, is the increased levels of classroom instruction related to Cross-content Area

Standards-based Practices and Authentic Instruction which have gone, on average, from monthly to weekly.

Outcomes

- The efforts by Social Street School have resulted in a number of positive school improvements in peer interactions, school climate, and student adjustment and achievement.
- Regularly scheduled parent-teacher (P-T) conferences are held more often. In 1998, 82% of teachers reported these conferences were held once or twice a year. In 2004, 100% reported holding conferences at least twice a year. The percentage of students' parents attending P-T conferences has decreased, but a higher percentage of teachers meet each week with parents to discuss student needs or concerns.
- The school work climate and the classroom climate remain positive and in some instances more positive, according to both teachers and students. Students perceive a more positive view of discipline and peer interactions. Teachers, too, report students are less disruptive in class.
- In addition, more students are reading books, up from 81% in 1998 to 93% in 2004.
- Student achievement in English language arts and mathematics has improved, particularly on assessments requiring higher level thinking skills.

Student Achievement History

| <u>Year</u> | <u>School Classification</u> |
|-------------|---|
| 2000-2001 | Moderately Performing/Not improving |
| 2001-2002 | Moderately Performing/ Improving in mathematics |
| 2002-2003 | In Need of Improvement/ Making Insufficient Progress (missed only 1 target) |
| | <u>Percent of students who achieved or achieved with honors (change from 2003)</u> |
| 2003-2004 | Math Skills 81% (+ 20%), Reading Basic Understanding 77% (+ 9%) Math Concepts 60% (+ 28%), Reading Analysis and Interpretation 74% (+ 21%) Math Problem Solving 47% (+ 15%) Writing Effectiveness 74% (+ 13%) Writing Conventions 63% (+ 6%) |

**N. A. Ferri Middle School
Johnston, RI**

Summary of SALT Survey Indicators

N. A. Ferri Middle School is a district-wide middle school. It is a large middle school with 77 teachers serving over 880 students in grades 6-8 with 22% of students eligible for free/reduced price lunch, 21% receiving special education services, and 2% receiving services relating to Limited English Proficiency.

Highlights:

- High levels of teacher “buy in” for school improvement
- Clear expectations for teachers and/or a well developed vision for school improvement
- Higher levels of parent engagement and support
- Higher expectations of students
- More professional development for teachers with a focus on curriculum standards, student learning needs, integrated instruction, and reading skill development
- Teams of teachers working together more often on the integration of the curriculum with a stronger focus on reading skill development and mathematical reasoning
- More frequent use of standards-based instruction across the curriculum and in literacy and numeracy
- More positive peer interactions, school climate, and student adjustment and achievement.
- More students are reading books
- Improvements in student achievement in ELA and mathematics

Attitudes/Norms/Expectations

- Positive changes in teacher, student, and parent attitudes are evident in this school’s SALT Survey data.

- Teachers at N. A. Ferri Middle School have “bought in” to the school improvement process. From 2001 to 2004, staff response rates have increased. In fact, in 2002-2003 100% of Ferri Middle School teachers completed the Staff Survey.

- Teacher reports of their attitudes toward educational practices remained positive and increasingly so for practices such as Heterogeneous Grouping, Integration, and Inclusion. Teachers’ level of endorsement toward traditional practices has decreased.

- Teachers report having higher expectations of students academic potential. They rated nearly 3/4 of the students capable of going on to post-secondary schools in 2004. In 1998, teachers rated NO students as capable of going beyond high school. Students seem to perceive this change, too, with more students reporting they believe their teachers have higher academic expectations of them.

- Teachers also report fewer barriers to the implementation of school accountability. In 1998, more than half the teachers felt that a lack of clear expectations for teachers and/or a well

developed vision about what is involved in this initiative and lack of training for teachers were moderate to major problems. In 2004, 75% of teachers **do not** see these as problem. The lack of materials and resources, as well as adequate time for planning, remain concerns.

- Parents' feelings toward the school are also more positive. For example, in 2004, 84% of parents reported they agreed that they felt this school views them as important partners, while in 1998, only 64% of parents felt this way.

Skills/Knowledge Base/Preparation

- Teachers report greater participation in more professional development activities in 2004. While in 1998, they reported participating in most types of activities only once a year or never, in 2004, more teachers reported participating in workshops, formal course work, and collaborative activities several times a year or more.
- The types of additional staff development wanted/needed has also changed in its focus. Teachers in 2004 asked for more staff development focused on addressing the needs of diverse learners, curriculum integration, and reading skill development. In 1998, the focus was on using computers in the classroom and standards-based practices for teaching and assessment.

Top Five Additional Staff Development Wanted/Needed

| Rank | 2003-2004 | 1997-1998 |
|------|--|--|
| 1 | Strategies for teaching broad range ability levels in the same classroom | Using computers as part of instruction |
| 2 | Tailoring instruction to student learning styles | Mastery learning techniques |
| 3 | Integrated curriculum and unit development | Teaching to new national standards in your subject area (e.g., NCTM Standards) |
| 4 | Inquiry or problem -centered learning | Strategies for teaching broad range ability levels in the same classroom |
| 5 | Reading skill development | Alternative/authentic assessment practices |

- Additionally, teachers have reported being much more familiar with standards in their content areas. While in 1998, only about 25% of teachers reported being very familiar with standards, in 2004, 67% of teachers reported being very familiar. Training in standards has also increased: ratings went from 16% to 42% of teachers reporting having received much to very much training in their primary content area.

Climate/Experiential Conditions

- Teacher report shifts in decision making. They reported greater levels of autonomy and less centralization of decision-making. They also reported having greater influence in school-wide goal setting and management. Furthermore, they reported higher levels of agreement with the quality of their team/grade-level interactions and cultural pluralism.

Procedures and Practices

- Teachers increased the levels at which they worked together on curriculum coordination, coordination of student assignments, assessments, and feedback, as well as sustaining the frequency with which they contacted parents and other building resource staff. This is especially evident in their focus on the integration of the curriculum. More integrated units were implemented in 2004 than in 1998 and these units have a greater emphasis on reading and mathematics skill development.
- Across the board, increases in the frequency of most classroom practices were reported by teachers, often from an average of monthly or less to several times a month or more. Most notable are the increased levels of classroom instruction related to Standards-based Practices for Literacy Instruction.

Outcomes

- The focused efforts by N. A. Ferri Middle School have resulted in a number of positive school improvements in peer interactions, school climate, and student adjustment and achievement.
- Regularly scheduled parent-teacher (P-T) conferences are held more often. In 1998, 64% of teachers reported these conferences were held only once a year. In 2004, 44% reported meeting once a year, another 36% reported meeting twice a year, and 12% reported they meet monthly with parents at regularly scheduled meetings. In 2004, more parents attended P-T conferences, especially parents of 8th graders. In 1998, only 20% of classroom teachers reported more than half the parents of their students attend P-T conferences. In 2004, more than 50% of teachers reported this level of parent participation at regularly scheduled conferences.
- The school work climate and classroom climate are more positive, according to both teachers and students.
- Student adjustment indicators have also changed for the better. Students reported they are less depressed, have fewer behavior problems, and higher levels of academic efficacy. In addition, they have maintained their high level of self esteem.
- In addition, more students are reading books, up from 64% in 1998 to 83% in 2004.
- Student achievement in English language arts and mathematics has improved.

Student Achievement History

| <u>Year</u> | <u>School Classification</u> |
|--|--|
| 2000-2001 | Low Performing/Not improving |
| 2001-2002 | Low Performing/Not improving |
| 2002-2003 | School in Need of Improvement/Making Progress (missed only 1 target) |
| <u>Percent of students who achieved or achieved with honors (change from 2003)</u> | |
| 2003-2004 | Math Skills 73% (+ 27%) |
| | Math Concepts 26% (+ 16%) |
| | Math Problem Solving 37% (+ 23%) |
| | Reading Basic Understanding 67% (+ 28%) |
| | Reading Analysis and Interpretation 38% (+ 21%) |
| | Writing Effectiveness 85% (+ 23%) |
| | Writing Conventions 56% (+ 12%) |

Exeter-West Greenwich Regional High School
Exeter-West Greenwich, RI

Summary of SALT Survey Indicators

Exeter-West Greenwich Regional High School is a district-wide high school. It is a moderately-sized high school with 45 teachers serving over 690 students in grades 9-12 with 7% of students eligible for free/reduced price lunch, 13% receiving special education services, and 0% receiving services relating to Limited English Proficiency.

Highlights:

- High levels of teacher “buy in” for school improvement and positive teacher attitudes toward adopting changes in instructional practices
- Higher levels of parent engagement and support
- Marked increases in teacher decision-making
- Improvements in teachers’ work climate
- High expectations for all students
- Greater efforts by teachers to engage parents in their children’s education, with more regular contact between teachers and parents
- Teams of teachers working together more often on the integration of the curriculum and coordination of instructional activities
- Substantial improvements in classroom instruction with increased use of a wide variety of instructional practices that support students’ achievement
- Implementation of block scheduling to support changes in classroom instruction
- Increased school safety
- Improvements in student achievement in ELA and mathematics

Attitudes/Norms/Expectations

- Positive changes in teacher and parent attitudes are evident in this school’s SALT Survey data.
- Teachers at Exeter-West Greenwich Regional High School have “bought in” to the school improvement process. In 2002-2003, 100% of teachers at Exeter-West Greenwich High School completed the Staff Survey.
- Teacher reports of their attitudes toward educational practices remained positive and increasingly so for practices such as small group instruction, exploratory mini-courses, parent outreach, and community-based learning opportunities.
- Teachers also report fewer barriers to the implementation of school accountability. In 1998, more than half the teachers felt that a lack of support for reform from teachers, lack of training for teachers, lack of opportunities for training in state and national standards were major or moderate problems. In 2004, fewer than 20% of teachers these as problems. The lack of materials and resources, as well as adequate time for planning, remain concerns.
- Parents’ feelings toward the school are also more positive. In 2004, more parents reported that the school was doing a good job of involving parents in parent-teacher conferences,

helping them check students' homework, giving assignments that require students to talk to their parents about things that they learned in school, and making it clear how grades were earned. The school was also rated as doing a better job of helping parents to understand their teen's development. In 2004, markedly more parents reported that they had visited their child's school

Skills/Knowledge Base/Preparation

- Consistently, teachers report moderate levels of participation in professional development activities across years. Teachers report that they participated in most types of professional development at least once a year.
- The types of additional staff development wanted/needed has changed in its focus. Teachers in 2004 asked for more staff development focused on addressing the needs of diverse learners, reading skill development, and further education in their content area. In 1998, the focus was on outcome based assessment, using computers in the classroom, and standards-based practices for teaching and assessment.

Top Five Additional Staff Development Wanted/Needed

| Rank | 2003-2004 | 1997-1998 |
|------|--|--|
| 1 | Strategies for teaching broad range ability levels in the same classroom | Outcome based curricula and assessment |
| 2 | Reading skill development | Using computers as a part of instruction |
| 3 | Additional post-degree preparation in your primary content area | Criterion-referenced lesson plans |
| 4 | Mastery learning techniques | Teaching to new national standards in your subject area (e.g., NCTM Standards) |
| 5 | Active "hands-on" learning | Alternative/authentic assessment practices |

- Additionally, teachers have reported being somewhat more familiar with standards in their content areas. While in 1998, only about 34% of teachers reported being very familiar with standards, in 2004, 44% of teachers reported being very familiar. Training in standards has also increased: ratings went from 13% to 20% of teachers reporting having received much to very much training in their primary content area.

Climate/Experiential Conditions

- Teachers report shifts in decision making. Teachers report that they had more authority over practices and policies that affect their grade level as well as ones that concern the school as a whole. They also report that the schools' building committee had greater influence in school-wide goal setting and management.

- Teachers' reports of work climate have improved, especially with regard to the organization and clarity of expectations, and recognition of teachers' work.
- Teachers report having higher standards for all students and placing more emphasis on cultural pluralism in their classrooms.
- Teachers report consistently high levels of cohesion with their colleagues across years.

Procedures and Practices

- Marked changes in instructional practices have taken place at this school. Teachers increased the levels at which they worked together on curriculum coordination, coordination of student assignments, assessments, and feedback, as well as increasing the frequency with which they contacted other building resource staff.
- Across the board, increases in the frequency of most classroom practices were reported by teachers. Between 1998 and 2003-2004, teachers markedly increased their use of practices related to small group active instruction, practices for heterogeneous ability grouping, authentic instruction, citizenship and social competence, critical thinking enhancement, and mastery based assessment.
- This school has implemented block scheduling on an intensive basis. In 1998, block scheduling was never used. In 2004, this form of scheduling is used every day. Block schedules may have given teachers more opportunity to implement the educational practices noted above.
- Teachers report marked increases in their efforts to reach parents and to increase their involvement in the education of their children. In particular, teachers increased levels of parental contact regarding student performance and homework.
- Teachers report marked increases in attendance at parent-teacher conferences. In 1998, none of the classroom teachers reported more than half the parents of their students attend parent-teacher conferences. In 2004, more than 75% of teachers reported this level of parent participation at regularly scheduled conferences. Regularly scheduled parent-teacher (P-T) conferences are also held more often. In 1998, 67% of teachers reported these conferences were held twice a year. In 2004, 92% reported meeting twice a year.

Outcomes

- Between 2003 and 2004, students showed marked gains in the New Standards Reference Examination tests in Math and English language arts (ELA), as shown in the table below.

Student Achievement History

| <u>Year</u> | <u>School Classification</u> |
|-------------|---|
| 2000-2001 | Moderately Performing/Improving in Mathematics |
| 2001-2002 | Moderately Performing/Improving in ELA and Math |
| 2002-2003 | Moderately Performing/Sustaining |

| | <u>Percent of students who achieved or achieved with honors (change from 2003)</u> | |
|-----------|---|---|
| 2003-2004 | Math Skills 75% (+ 13%), | Reading Basic Understanding 54% (+ 17%) |
| | Math Concepts 53% (+ 17%), | Reading Analysis and Interpretation 51% (+ 20%) |
| | Math Problem Solving 50% (+ 18%) | Writing Effectiveness 56% (+ 20%) |
| | | Writing Conventions 72% (+ 4%) |

- In addition to the gains in achievement shown above, both teachers and students report fewer problems with personal safety in 2004 compared with 1998. Students report lower levels of problem behavior in 2004 than they did in 1998.