Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
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Margaret I. Robertson School

CENTRAL FALLS

THE SALT VISIT TEAM REPORT

October 24, 2003

School Accountability for Learning and Teaching (SALT)

The school accountability program of the Rhode Island Department of Education

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Purpose and Limits of This Report

This is the report of the SALT team that visited Margaret I. Robertson School from October 20 to October 24, 2003.

The SALT visit report makes every effort to provide your school with a valid, specific picture of how well your students are learning. The report also portrays how the teaching in your school affects learning, and how the school supports learning and teaching. The purpose of developing this information is to help you make changes in teaching and the school that will improve the learning of your students. The report is valid because the team's inquiry is governed by a protocol that is carefully designed to make it possible for visit team members to make careful judgments using accurate evidence. The careful exercise of professional judgment makes the findings useful for school improvement because these judgments identify where the visit team thinks the school is doing well, and where it is doing less well.

The major questions the team addressed were:

How well do students learn at Margaret I. Robertson School?

How well does the teaching at Margaret I. Robertson School affect learning?

How well does Margaret I. Robertson School support learning and teaching?

The following features of this visit are at the heart of the report:

Members of the visit team are primarily teachers and administrators from Rhode Island public schools. The majority of team members are teachers. The names and affiliations of the team members are listed at the end of the report.

The team sought to capture what makes this school work, or not work, as a public institution of learning. Each school is unique and the team has tried to capture what makes Margaret I. Robertson School distinct.

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

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

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

The team made its judgment explicit.

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

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

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

SALT visits undergo rigorous quality control. Catalpa Ltd. monitors each visit and determines whether the report can be endorsed. Endorsement assures the reader that the team and the school followed the visit protocol. It also assures that the conclusions and the report meet specified standards.

Sources of Evidence

The Sources of Evidence that this team used to support its conclusions are listed in the appendix.

The team spent a total of over 96 hours in direct classroom observation. Most of this time was spent in observing complete lessons or classes. Almost every classroom was visited at least once, and almost every teacher was observed more than once.

The full visit team built the conclusions, commendations, and recommendations presented here through intense and thorough discussion. The team met for a total of 30 hours in team meetings spanning the five days of the visit. This time does not include the time the team spent in classrooms, with teachers, and in meetings with students, parents, and school and district administrators.

The team did agree by consensus that every conclusion in this report is:

Important enough to include in the report

Supported by the evidence the team gathered during the visit

Set in the present, and

Contains the judgment of the team

Using the Report

This report is designed to have value to all audiences concerned with how Margaret I. Robertson School can improve student learning. However, the most important audience is the school itself.

How your school improvement team reads and considers the report is the critical first step. RIDE will provide a SALT Fellow to lead a follow-up session with the school improvement team to help start the process. With support from the Central Falls School Improvement Coordinator and from SALT fellows, the school improvement team should carefully decide what changes it wants to make in learning, teaching, and the school, and amend its School Improvement Plan to reflect these decisions.

The Central Falls, RIDE and the public should consider what the report says or implies about how they can best support Margaret I. Robertson School as it works to strengthen its performance.

Any reader of this report should consider the report as a whole. A reader who only looks at recommendations misses important information.

2. PROFILE OF MARGARET I. ROBERTSON SCHOOL

The Margaret I. Robertson School is one of four elementary schools in the Central Falls School District in Central Falls, Rhode Island. Central Falls is a densely populated inner city district. The school's student body is transitory; Robertson serves as the city's "overflow" school. Due to inequalities in population densities throughout Central Falls, Robertson accepts students who cannot attend their neighborhood schools due to contractual classroom number limits as specified by the contract. Students are mobile throughout the year as well, visiting their homelands or moving in and out of the state.

At the present time this school serves students in grades one through five. The school was built in 1927 with 11 classrooms. A two-story addition, completed in 1999, increased the number of classrooms to 13 and included a library/media center, an art/music room that now serves as another classroom, two small special needs classrooms, one resource room and a Title 1 classroom. The support staff shares an additional room.

The students at Robertson School are served by a professional staff of one administrator, 13 classroom teachers, one full-time Title 1 teacher, one full-time resource teacher, two part-time health teachers, five part-time support staff (psychologist, social worker, speech therapist, occupational therapist and guidance counselor), two itinerant physical education teachers, one itinerant music teacher, one itinerant art teacher, one itinerant librarian, one part-time library secretary, one part-time home/school liaison, one secretary, one full-time school substitute, four special needs teacher assistants, two custodians, three lunch aides and a kitchen staff of three.

Of the 240 students in attendance here, 145 (60%) are Hispanic, 62 (26%) are white and 18 (8%) are black. There are 37 (15%) special education students. Ninety-two (38%) students are enrolled in ESL classes at all grade levels.

Students are involved in after school clubs and activities, which include Chess Club, Ukulele Club, and Knitting Club.

The Central Falls school district is dedicated to improving instruction and learning in literacy. Some teachers are trained in Balanced Literacy. All Robertson teachers received some leveled reading books this year. Teachers also received training in the use of Kid Writing and Empowering Writers. They use writing and math exemplars in classrooms at all grade levels. Literacy coaches conduct professional development, grade level articulation group meetings and model lessons for classroom teachers.

Into English is the required language program for ESL students. These students are integrated into an academic area with regular education students through the use of the Core Literature portion of the Balanced Literacy program. An after school and summer program, *Gaining Grounds*, is offered to the most "at risk" students, who need additional support and learning time.

The school is in its third year of implementing the *Investigations* math series. Teachers received training in this program and are assisted by two math coaches in this work.

Robertson teachers received an *Enhancing Education through Technology* Grant, which provided additional computer hardware. This equipment will provide a 4 to 1 computer ratio in each classroom. The grant also provided teachers with a two-week summer training program in its use. Teachers received training in Running Records as well as in how to integrate the technology effectively into their instruction. However, full implementation of this initiative has yet to occur. Presently, the district is in the process of hiring a technology technician to help Robertson School teachers in setting up and running the equipment that arrived this fall.

3. PORTRAIT OF MARGARET I. ROBERTSON SCHOOL AT THE TIME OF THE VISIT

Robertson School is a small neighborhood school that provides a safe, warm, and caring environment, where quality teaching and learning take place. Although the students vary in their abilities, experiences and backgrounds, they are all enthusiastic and respectful learners. For them, school is a place to share, learn and grow.

The faculty exhibits the same enthusiasm as the children. It is clear that they are exceptionally nurturing and that they give unselfishly of their time and resources to benefit their students. The parents of these students are appreciative of the hard work put forth by the faculty and staff. Their satisfaction is evident, when they talk about this school and all that it does for their children. They recognize that their children are receiving a quality experience at Robertson School.

The administrator, faculty, staff and parents have built a supportive, inviting community here. They all work to help one another. Teachers work hard together professionally and, at the same time, are true personal friends. The principal supports her teachers, as they continue to refine their teaching practices. Although teachers express a desire to see her in the classrooms more often, they state that they can count on their principal to advocate for them.

Operating within the framework of their district strategic plan and budgeting constraints, the Robertson faculty takes risks in order to grow professionally. Teachers take their responsibilities seriously and with true enjoyment.

4. FINDINGS ON STUDENT LEARNING

Conclusions

Students come to school ready to learn. Students say they are responsible for themselves and that they are accountable for their work, behavior and learning. They are organized. They recognize the value of their educational experiences and arrive at school with positive attitudes. They are proud of their cultural differences and believe, if they work hard, that they will do well. These children are truly unique! *(following students, observing classes, observing the school outside the classroom, meeting with the school improvement team, students, school and district administrators, parents, talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrator)*

Clearly, Robertson School students are successful in acquiring the skills they need to become competent math learners. All students express excitement about doing math. Students say they are very comfortable using the *Investigations* program materials, and they enthusiastically participate in their lessons. It is evident that students build on the math knowledge they gained in previous grades. They effectively communicate their math understanding by using numbers and words and by showing a good working knowledge of math vocabulary. This knowledge is reflected in their math journal entries. Because the children have a clear understanding of what is expected of them, they are able to assess their work independently. Students also work cooperatively with partners and in groups, discussing their ideas and solving problems. Students confidently complete homework assignments that both reinforce and extend the skills they've learned in the classroom. They successfully use a variety of strategies to solve problems. Students are developing an excellent sense regarding the relationships of numbers. These student competencies help to explain the rise in scores on all math subtests of the 2003 New Standards Reference Examination. *(following students, observing classes, talking with students and teachers, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, discussing student work with teachers, reviewing classroom assessments, 2003 New Standards Reference Examination School Summaries)*

Students view themselves as competent readers. It is evident that they read with understanding and make connections to self, world and other texts. In whole-group settings, they successfully predict, access prior knowledge, and construct explanations through analogies. Students are adept at analyzing and interpreting the text. They are focused and engaged in following along in the shared reading of CORE literature, books on tape, and self-selected reading. They enthusiastically read to meet the standard of reading 25 books on their own. They are developing the attitudes and skills to become life long readers. These competencies help to explain the rise in scores on the 2003 New Standards Reference Examination Reading interpretation and analysis subtest. Students at Robertson School are prepared for greater challenges. *(following students, observing classes, reviewing classroom textbooks, 2003 New Standards Reference Examination School Summaries, meeting with the school improvement team, students, school and district administrators, parents, talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrator, observing the school outside the classroom)*

Students are learning the skills of successful writers. Because they know the expectations and criteria for the assessment of their work, they write enthusiastically, with confidence and independence. A variety of engaging student writing is found prominently displayed throughout the school. Students write productively on a daily basis in reading journals and math journals, as well as in their personal journals. Using the Empowering Writers process as a foundation, they produce well-detailed and entertaining stories in a variety of genres. Students use appropriate writer's terminology, when they discuss narrative and expository pieces. Structure and organization is evident in their writing. Focus, clarity and voice shine through. Students take pride in their writing. They feel successful and enjoy sharing what they write. *(following students, observing classes, observing the school outside the classroom, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, discussing student work with teachers, talking with students, teachers, reviewing classroom assessments, meeting with the school improvement team and students)*

Important Thematic Findings in Student Learning

Students are effective communicators and risk takers.

Students are motivated and eager to learn the strategies that will help them learn independently.

Students have a clear understanding of what is expected of them, and they continually assess and improve their own work to meet goals and objectives.

5. FINDINGS ON TEACHING FOR LEARNING

Conclusions

The teachers at Robertson School are very special! They are veteran teachers, who continue to learn and grow as professionals. They generously give of their time and resources so their students will be successful. They genuinely care for their students and believe in their abilities. A sense of collegiality envelops the faculty and staff. They express confidence and pride in what they do for their students, parents, and the school community. They epitomize what good teachers should be! *(following students, observing classes, observing the school outside the classroom, meeting with the school improvement team, students, school and district administrators, parents, talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrators, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, discussing student work with teachers)*

Teachers effectively promote the development of their students' writing skills across the curriculum. They regularly model the writing process based on the *Empowering Writers* program. They diligently encourage students to use charts with scripted sentence starters, along with graphic organizers, as a framework for developing their writing. They maintain organized word walls to enrich their students' writing pieces. Teachers read quality literature to students, noting important elements of authors' craft. Therefore, students effectively use these elements in their own original written pieces. Teachers expose their students to many genres of writing. Their sound teaching practices positively advance the students' ability to write well. This is reflected in the students' improved achievement in writing on the state assessments. *(observing classes, following students, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, meeting with the school improvement team, students, school administrator, discussing student work with teachers, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, 2003 New Standards Reference Examination School Summaries, 2002 and 2003 Rhode Island Writing Assessment results)*

The teachers work diligently to present a balanced literacy curriculum, as described in both the district strategic plan and the school improvement plan. Through the use of CORE literature, they successfully model fluency and encourage students to develop higher-level comprehension strategies. Teachers clearly promote the development of phonetic and spelling skills through their use of the *Spelling Connections* program. They integrate their use of word walls and phonetic instruction throughout the curriculum. Students have opportunities for self-directed reading and write insightful reading responses in their journals. Some teachers reply to their students' entries, encouraging them to delve deeper into the meaning of the text. All teachers provide a print-rich environment for students to develop their vocabularies in all content areas. However, when teachers conduct *Guided Reading* lessons with their classes, the quality of the lessons varies from class to class and grade to grade. Some of the materials used in *Guided Reading* are not leveled or are insufficient in number. Some teachers have not had sufficient training in this process. These factors weaken the effectiveness of the overall reading program by limiting the teachers' capacities to address the range of student ability levels found in each of their classrooms. Even though the students have improved their reading scores on the 2003 New Standards Reference Examination, greater improvement would be possible in all grades with more focused *Guided Reading* instruction at each student's level. *(following students, observing classes, talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrator, meeting with the school improvement team, students, school and district administrators, parents, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, discussing student work with teachers, reviewing district strategic plan, reviewing school improvement plan, 2003 New Standards Reference Examination School Summaries, 2003 SALT Survey report, reviewing classroom textbooks, 2003 Information Works!, reviewing records of professional development activities, reviewing district and school policies and practices)*

The teachers' contagious enthusiasm for teaching math is based on their confidence in the soundness of the *Investigations* math program. They prominently display math word walls and graphic representations to support their students' understanding and learning. They successfully use various "hands-on" materials to support their classroom instruction. Teachers encourage students to use math rubrics to assess and improve their work. They continually promote individual and creative math thinking and problem solving. Independence is fostered among the students, enabling them to discover and develop strategies on their own. Teachers also encourage cooperative learning groups, where students learn to be interdependent in their math learning. Through modeling and practice, they effectively teach their students to use proper terminology when they explain their mathematical thinking. All students thrive in this math-rich environment. *(following students, observing classes, observing the school outside the classroom, meeting with the school improvement team, students, school administrator and parents, talking with students, teachers, and school administrator, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, discussing student work with teachers, reviewing classroom assessments)*

Commendations for Margaret I. Robertson School

Genuine and caring professionals

Respectful, accepting teachers with a great deal of integrity

A supportive, cooperative, hardworking team

Recommendations for Margaret I. Robertson School

Continue professional development in differentiated instruction, especially in reading. Use all of the resources that are available to you.

Continue to take risks for the betterment of the students.

Recommendations for Central Falls School District

Provide all Robertson teachers with the necessary materials and training to implement the balanced literacy framework effectively, especially in Guided Reading and the Open Court Phonics program.

6. FINDINGS ON SCHOOL SUPPORT FOR LEARNING AND TEACHING

Conclusions

This learning community is undeniably unique. Parents send their children to school with an intrinsic belief in the value of education. The parents cannot say enough about what the school does for their children. The teachers and staff embrace the parents and community in their daily work. They understand the different backgrounds of the community and are able to make the connection between home and school. Teachers have high expectations for their students and encourage their growth as lifelong learners. *(following students, observing classes, talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrator, meeting with students, school and district administrators, parents, reviewing school improvement plan, 2003 Information Works!, 2003 SALT Survey report)*

A clearly delineated framework for reading instruction with related professional development for all teachers is not in place. Robertson School is working hard to implement the literacy components of the district strategic plan. While the district's literacy framework, as written, is comprehensive in scope, the district does not provide consistent guidance in how or when to implement it. It does not provide a clear mandate for what all teachers should do in reading instruction. As a result, within Robertson School, there is little continuity from grade-to-grade and from class-to-class. While teachers teach reading well, the inconsistencies in the guidance make the *Guided Reading* portion of the program less effective. It does not adequately support teachers' focusing on individual student needs through differentiated instruction. This curriculum does not spell out the steps that all teachers need to follow in delivering a unified reading program for all students at Robertson School. *(following students, talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrator, meeting with the school improvement team, students, school and district administrators, parents, discussing student work with teachers, reviewing district strategic plan, reviewing district and school policies and practices, reviewing records of professional development activities)*

Parents want to be more involved in the everyday activities of the school and more informed about them. They are willing to volunteer their time, and they need the school's input in determining how they can help. The Coffee Hour with the Principal, alternative meeting times for SIT, and an established PTO organization are three wishes that parents express. Parents request more activities such as family events and additional fieldtrips. Also, they would like an ESL class for adults to take place within this school. It is both significant and admirable that parents wish to take an active part in the school community. The students will be the beneficiaries of this deepened educational partnership. *(meeting with the school improvement team, school and district administrators, parents, talking with teachers, staff, and school administrator, reviewing school improvement plan, 2003 SALT Survey report)*

The ESL classes, at all grade levels, strive to meet the needs of approximately 40% of the students at Robertson School. Smaller class sizes give teachers the opportunity to provide one-on-one and small group instruction to students. The CORE literature program helps to prepare these students for greater success on the state assessments. It also allows for ESL students to integrate into the mainstream classes. Teachers admirably provide a wealth of learning experiences for their students. However, they allow students to take risks in their learning only on a limited basis. Overall, these students are not as challenged, academically, as they could be. *(following students, observing classes, talking with students, 2003 Information Works!, reviewing district and school policies and practices)*

The school has a plethora of leaders! Teachers seek out new expertise through the Professional Development Academy offerings. They improve the quality of their instruction through their participation. Others within the school would benefit from the expertise that these teachers have acquired. This sharing of expertise would greatly increase the cohesiveness of the programs that are instituted here. Members on this staff are ready to become instructors and mentors for their colleagues. Since the principal attends the same professional development activities as the teachers, she could become more active and involved in the classroom setting. Both teachers and students express a desire for their principal to be more visible and integral in classroom activities. Her role as leader would be broadened. *(following students, observing classes, observing the school outside the classroom, talking with students, teachers, and school administrator)*

Commendations for Margaret I. Robertson School

Clean and safe school

Inviting, welcoming atmosphere

Strong sense of community

Satisfied and supportive parents

Recommendations for Margaret I. Robertson School

Use the experts in your school to model and mentor best practices for staff development, especially in Guided Reading.

Schedule the literacy coach to work with the teachers as they begin to differentiate their instruction in Guided Reading.

Follow through on the School Improvement Plan strategy #4 to increase parent involvement.

Increase expectations and rigor in the ESL program to prepare students better to meet the standards.

Recommendations for Central Falls School District

Provide professional development for all teachers in differentiated instruction, particularly in the Guided Reading component of your balanced literacy framework.

7. FINAL ADVICE TO MARGARET I. ROBERTSON SCHOOL

The Robertson School is a remarkable, unique learning environment. Teachers, staff, and students work together to grow and learn in academic as well as social areas. The students are very respectful and eager; the teachers are dedicated and nurturing; and the principal sets the tone. It is heartening to see the wonderful work that is being done here.

With your continued diligence, the school is well positioned for excellence. A focus on differentiated instruction and increased rigor for all students will only accelerate their growth. District support for professional development and sufficient materials will lay the groundwork for more consistent instruction in Guided Reading and phonics. Use the expertise of your teachers, as instructors and mentors. This will have a tremendous impact on the consistency of your program delivery across the grades. Invite your principal into the daily lessons in your classrooms. All will benefit from this interaction, especially the students. Use the parents' willingness to be active members of your learning community as a precious resource. Include them more fully in your organization and social events.

Just within the entrance to your school, there is a sign that reads "Try Harder, Get Smarter." This is appropriate for Robertson. The teachers 'try harder' in so many ways so that their students 'get smarter' and succeed in all they do. Good luck and smooth journey to you, as you take your next steps toward excellence.

ENDORSEMENT OF SALT VISIT TEAM REPORT

Margaret I. Robertson School

October 24, 2003

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

> Did the SALT visit team and the host school conduct the visit in a manner that is reasonably consistent with the protocol for the visit?
>
> Do the conclusions of the report meet the tests for conclusions specified in the visit protocol (important, accurate, set in present, shows the team's judgment)?
>
> Does the report meet the tests for a report as specified in the visit protocol (fair, useful, and persuasive of productive action)?

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

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

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

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

The routine steps that Catalpa Ltd. completed for this review were:

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

The findings from the review are:

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

Accordingly, Catalpa Ltd. endorses this report.

Thomas A. Wilson, Ed.D.
Catalpa Ltd.
DATE:

REPORT APPENDIX

Sources of Evidence for This Report

In order to write this report the team examined test scores, student work, and other documents related to this school. The school improvement plan for Margaret I. Robertson School was the touchstone document for the team. No matter how informative documents may be, however, there is no substitute for being at the school while it is in session—in the classrooms, in the lunchroom, and in the hallways. The team built its conclusions primarily from information about what the students, staff, and administrators think and do during their day. Thus, this visit allowed the team to build informed judgments about the teaching, learning, and support that actually takes place at Margaret I. Robertson School.

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

- *direct classroom observation*
- *observing the school outside of the classroom*
- *following seven students for a full day*
- *observing the work of teachers and staff for a full day*
- *meeting at scheduled times with the following groups:*
  - *teachers*
  - *school improvement team*
  - *school and district administrators*
  - *students*
  - *parents*
- *talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrators*
- *reviewing completed and ongoing student work*
- *discussing student work with teachers*
- *analyzing state assessment results as reported in* Information Works!
- *reviewing the following documents:*
  - *district and school policies and practices*
  - *records of professional development activities*
  - *classroom assessments*
  - *Margaret I. Robertson Plan for Schoolwide Improvement for All Children in our School, 2003-2004*
  - *Margaret I. Robertson Elementary School S.A.L.T. Visit binder*
  - *Margaret I. Robertson Self Study*
  - *Central Falls Reading Standards Overview, March 2003*
  - *Central Falls School District, Balanced Literacy Institute, June 2003*
  - *Central Falls* Investigations *Program: 2003-2004*
  - *Central Falls School Community Strategic Plan, May 2003*
  - *Central Falls School District Narrative Writing Exemplars, Grades k-5, 2000-2002*
  - *Central Falls School District Mathematics Exemplar, Grades K-5, 2000-*

2003

Tenured and Non-tenured Teacher Evaluation Procedure and Mentoring folder

Central Falls District Professional Development Academy, By Laws and 2003-2004 offerings

Central Falls Balanced Literacy Framework, 1st Edition, Summer 2003

ESL Standards for PreK-12

Special Education Procedural Manual

Title 1 Budget, 2003-2004

CORE Literature binder

School and District report cards

Contract between The Central Falls Teachers' Union and the Central Falls School District, 2002-2005

MI Robertson Elementary School Handbook for 2002-2003, in English, Portuguese and Spanish

Grade 1 Reading Benchmarks binder

Teacher Support Team Book

2003 SALT Survey report

classroom textbooks

2003 Information Works!

2003 New Standards Reference Examination School Summaries

2003 Rhode Island Writing Assessment results

State Assessment Results for Margaret I. Robertson School

Assessment results create pieces of evidence that the visit team uses as it conducts its inquiry. The team uses this evidence to shape its efforts to locate critical issues for the school. It also uses this evidence, along with other evidence, to draw conclusions about those issues.

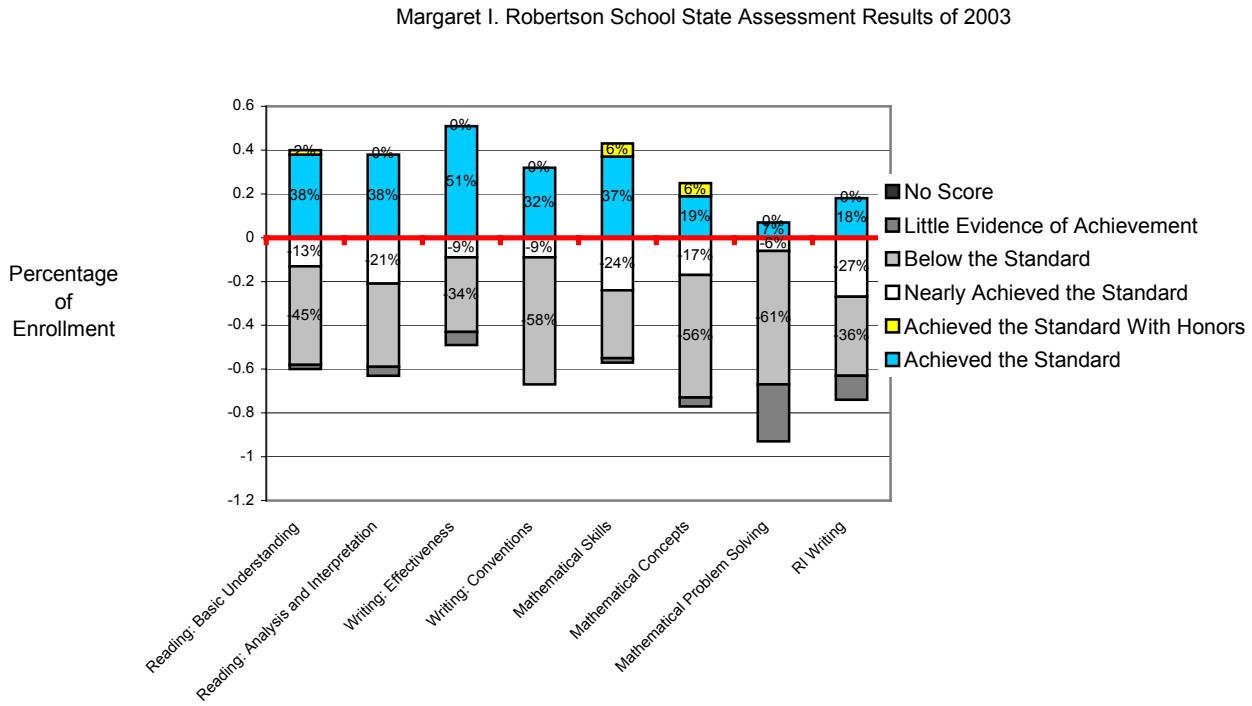
This school's results are from the latest available state assessment information. It is presented here in four different ways:

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

RESULTS IN RELATION TO PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

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

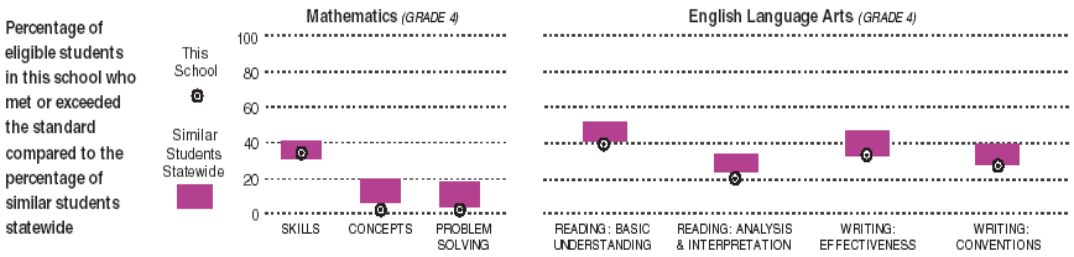
Table1. 2002-03 Student Results on Rhode Island State Assessments



RESULTS COMPARED TO SIMILAR STUDENTS IN THE STATE

This chart includes the performance levels of students with special education needs, students participating in ESL or bilingual programs, low socio-economic status (a composite of income level, racial background and parental education), as well as the performance of students with none of these characteristics. Taking all these characteristics into account, the graph displays the overall performance of students in this school compared to - a group of students from across the state whose characteristics match this school's students.

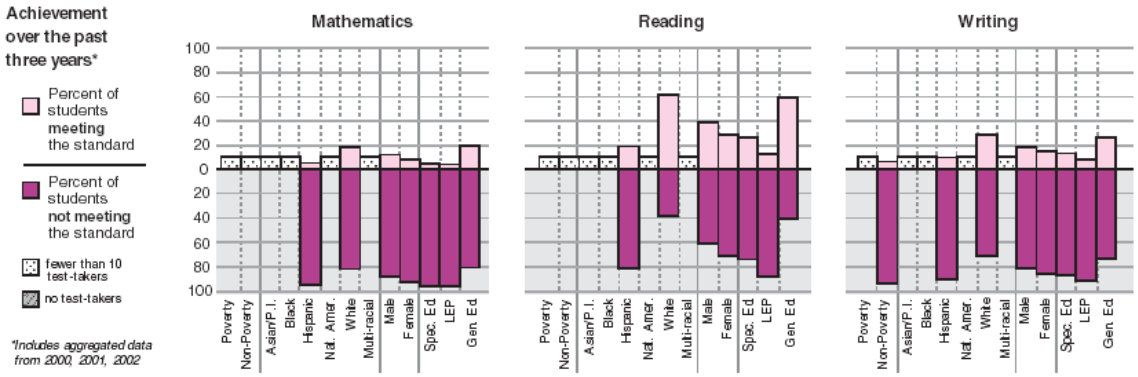
Table 2. 2001-2002 Student Results in Comparison to Similar Students Statewide



RESULTS ACROSS STUDENT GROUPS WITHIN THE SCHOOL

An important way to display student results is across different groups of students with different characteristics who are in the school. This display creates information about how well the school meets the learning needs of its various students. Since breaking students into these smaller groups can result in groups becoming too small to show accurate results, this display shows the results based on three years of testing. The Department defines an important gap between different groups (an equity gap) to be a gap of 15% or more.

Table 3. 2001-2002 Student Results across Subgroups



RESULTS OVER TIME

Now that the state assessment program has been functioning for five years, it is possible to show results over meaningful periods of time. The Information Works! display shows changes in the percentage of students at or above standard and the percentage of students in the lowest performance categories. These displays correspond to the targets the Department of Education asked schools to set four years ago and are the basis for the department categorizing schools as improving or non-improving.

The Margaret I. Robertson School has been categorized as low performing, not improving, on the basis of its assessment results from 1998 to 2002.

Information Works! data for Margaret I. Robertson School is available at http://www.ridoe.net.

THE MARGARET I. ROBERTSON SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT TEAM

Patricia Eddins
Grade 4 Teacher

Georgia Hepburn
Grade 1 ESL Teacher

Carolyn Parenteau
Title 1 Teacher

Deborah Wilson
Grade 3 Teacher

Geraldine Capotosto
Principal

Patricia Morris
Director of ESL
District School Improvement Coordinator

MEMBERS OF THE SALT VISIT TEAM

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Charlotte Woods Elementary School
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Ashton Elementary School
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