

# **SALT**

**A Blueprint  
for  
School Accountability for  
Learning and Teaching**

**THE FINAL REPORT OF THE  
RHODE ISLAND SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY TEAM**

**“The purpose of school accountability is  
to improve teaching and learning.”**

**The Rhode Island Department of Education**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Edition – February 1997**

# **THE ESSENCE OF SALT**

## **SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY**

### **FOR LEARNING AND TEACHING**

#### **AN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Rhode Island School Accountability Team presents its plan, School Accountability for Learning and Teaching (SALT), for public consideration. The result of three years of discussions of Rhode Island educators and RIDE staff, SALT is a reconstructed, state-wide, school accountability system designed to support the implementation of the Board of Regents' strategic agenda and the Goals 2000 Plan. Focused squarely on raising Rhode Island student performance, SALT is based on a set of ten principles for accountability. SALT provides a comprehensive approach that allows local schools and their communities to drive the quality of what happens in schools supported by a network of shared responsibility at all levels. SALT recognizes at its core the vital importance of teachers assuming and acting on real professional responsibility and skill. Past accountability systems too often created hurdles for teachers as professionals.

Both the concepts behind SALT and the program elements that make up SALT are described in *Blueprint*. SALT's key conclusions and action recommendations are:

- Accountability must be based on principles of the public responsibility of educators, rather than on a mix of practices, projects or methodologies of measurement.

SALT is designed to inform and drive efforts to:

Close gaps in student performance, ensure equity and increase the likelihood that Rhode Island students will be ready for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

- Accountability must be school-based, school-owned and school-driven.

SALT calls for schools to:

Discuss individual student learning goals with families

Set up processes of continuous self-improvement that focus on increasing student performance and that use proven practices.

- Schools cannot be left to work alone, if they are to improve student performance.

SALT calls for a network that will share the responsibility for accountability by:

Participating in the cycle of continuous school review

Advocating for resources and support for schools

Strengthening the support role of school districts

Demanding effective and efficient integrated social services

Allocating resources and support in relation to school and student needs.

- Schools benefit from the fresh perspective of external peer review.

SALT calls for a visiting team to visit schools every 4 or 5 years to:

Reinforce the importance of focusing on the practice of teaching and learning

Inform and influence the school's improvement planning

Identify targeted support schools need from the districts and RIDE.

- State student assessment results are only a starting point for knowing, judging and supporting schools.

SALT calls for:

Connecting local assessment results to the State Assessment Plan (SAP) data

Creating new ways for schools, districts and RIDE to know how each of them is performing

School districts and RIDE field service teams to focus their support on the identified needs of schools, as expressed in their school improvement plans and buttressed by the School Visits

SALT becoming the basis for school approval

Coordinating RIDE's school approval and NEASC accreditation processes to eliminate duplication of effort by schools.

- Mandates that serve a useful purpose should be maintained and others should be eliminated.

SALT calls for:

Reducing or eliminating mandates that tell schools how to improve student performance

Retaining mandates that assure basic equity, safety and health standards

Requiring local districts to establish graduation standards that are based on student performance, not on seat time or Carnegie units

Setting high standards locally within State guidelines, and then measuring them by valid and reliable local assessments

Promoting and supporting improvement in all schools, not only the troubled ones.

- A school that chronically fails to “close the gaps” in student performance cannot be tolerated.

SALT calls for:

The school to accept primary responsibility for its own success and to commit itself to continuous improvement

The local school district to intervene when a school is not “closing the gaps”

The State to intervene when local support and intervention fail to enable a school to close the “gaps.”

- A well informed public will demand continuous improvement and will support improving schools.

SALT calls for annual reports of each school’s progress that:

Give families better information about their children’s school

Reassures all citizens that their educational investment is well spent, thus generating increased support

Exposes weaknesses that need to be addressed.

## CONTENTS

<b>AN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>I. INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>7</b>
A. What SALT Does	7
B. What <i>Blueprint</i> Does	11
<b>II. PRINCIPLES AND CONSTRUCTS</b>	<b>12</b>
A. The Challenge of Accountability	12
B. Principles	15
C. Definitions	18
1. Accountability	18
2. Student Performance	19
3. Teaching and Learning	20
4. School Performance	21
5. Disaggregated Data	22
6. Family	23
7. School	23
D. Network of School Accountability	24
1. Schools	24
2. School Governing Agencies	30
3. Other Organizations	34
4. The Public	36
E. School Support and Intervention	39
F. Measurement	41
<b>III. THE STRUCTURES AND PROCESSES FOR IMPLEMENTATION</b>	<b>43</b>
A. Mandates	43
B. School-based Accountability	46
C. Assessing Student Performance	49
D. School Visits	51
E. Continuous School Support	53
F. Progressive Steps of Incentives and Disincentives	55
G. Teacher Performance Evaluations	57
H. School Approval	58
I. Other Audits	59
J. Public Reporting	60
K. The Role of Districts	62
L. The Role of RIDE	63
<b>IV. NEXT STEPS</b>	<b>65</b>

<b>V. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</b>	<b>67</b>
A. The Accountability Team	67
1. Leadership Team	67
2. Task Group on Responsibilities	67
3. Task Group on Mandates	68
4. Task Group on Support and Intervention	68
5. Task Group on Measurement	68
6. Team Members	69
B. Opportunity to Learn Team (OTL)	70
1. Leadership	70
2. Team Members	70
C. The School Improvement and Accountability Initiative Team	70
1. Members	70
2. RIDE Staff	71
D. Other Resources	71
<b>VI. REFERENCES</b>	<b>72</b>

## INTRODUCTION

### What SALT Does

The Interim Report of the Rhode Island Goals 2000 Panel (February 1996) defines the overarching policy issue for Rhode Island Education:

...The urgent and critical task is [to build] public support and consensus on education policy and practice that focuses on helping all students succeed. To succeed is to ensure that every graduation ceremony is attended by all students who began their secondary education. And, to succeed is to ensure that all the students leave those graduation ceremonies as lifelong learners, productive workers and responsible citizens. Our children deserve it, their families and fellow citizens expect it, and our society needs it to grow and prosper in ways that match the demands of the next century. This means that we must face and grapple with three overriding realities. These are hard work, tough choices, and political will.

This final report from the Rhode Island School Accountability Team (RISAT) is part of the necessary “hard work.” It makes “tough choices” and it will help build the “political will.” During this period of developing a strategy to improve Rhode Island education, best represented by the work of the Goals 2000 Plan, the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) has been considering how to best construct its working relationships with schools and districts so that policy defined at the state level will become practice in Rhode Island classrooms. This consideration has focused on accountability -- what it means and how to make it work best toward the end of ensuring student success.

RISAT presents School Accountability for Learning and Teaching (SALT) as a plan for how to organize the implementation of the strategic agenda. This report, *SALT: A Blueprint*, brings to fruition three years of work on how accountability must shape the effective working relationships among schools, districts and RIDE. The RISAT team built upon the work of The School

Improvement and Accountability Initiative Team and the Opportunities to Learn Team. These teams were comprised of RIDE staff, Rhode Island educators and community members. (See *Acknowledgments* for a fuller history of this work, as well as for the lists of participants.)

This report presents SALT as the basis for a new and comprehensive accountability system to raise student performance. SALT supports the basic elements of the Board of Regents' strategic agenda and the Goals 2000 Plan in these ways:

*Setting High Standards for Learning and Teaching.* While high standards must be set, their value in influencing student performance will depend upon how teachers and schools ultimately use them in their daily work with students. SALT directly considers how to engage schools and teachers so that they understand how standards can be used and are able to use them to improve actual classroom practice.

*Reporting Results.* SALT is built upon developing better ways of learning about schools and reporting that information so that:

- school-based efforts to improve teaching and learning will be more effective
- districts and RIDE can base their understanding of schools on better information about teaching and learning
- the public is able to engage in a deeper and more useful dialogue about what makes schools better.

*Supporting the education system.* Supporting the system by providing good information about what does and does not work is at the heart of SALT. Systemic support requires RIDE, the district and others to recognize the responsibilities that each of their roles require, as well as to relate these responsibilities directly to the school.

*Ensuring Fiscal Equity.* SALT's principles are based on the national discussion about equity. That discussion acknowledges that

accountability requires an effective and efficient use of fiscal resources to enable teachers and schools to meet the challenges of teaching and learning for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

There is widespread recognition in Rhode Island that the current system of financing education does not permit all districts to support fiscally the education their students need. This condition results from a combination of students' high educational need and low levels of fiscal resources in the same districts. The Board of Regents recognizes that educational finance should be based on student need. Plans are underway for significant improvements in fiscal reporting and to allow analysis of how funding is targeted to each program element. SALT proposes implementation procedures that support this by creating stronger links between fiscal expenditures and instructional practice and student learning. These links between practice at the school, district and state level and student performance will allow for an examination of the effectiveness of various policies and programs on closing the gaps in student performance. For example a district will have information that shows the results of a policy it has initiated on student performance. This examination of practices by level will be part of the reports at all levels of the educational system.

*System of Interventions.* SALT provides the foundation for setting in place a system of incentives and disincentives for school performance. This foundation will encourage schools and districts to use educational practices that improve student learning and to discontinue practices that are neutral or that have a negative effect. SALT greatly improves the nature of information that is available for RIDE and districts to intervene effectively. SALT also allows the use of a wider range of intervention tools.

By redefining the definition and practices of accountability, SALT proposes a new and effective way for RIDE, the districts and the schools to engage the

Goals 2000 Plan and strategic agenda so that these plans have a chance of making a difference where it most counts, in our state's classrooms.

*SALT: A Blueprint*, the final report of RISAT is not intended to be an implementation plan for SALT. While it is detailed and specific, RISAT's charge was to organize Rhode Island school accountability policy and practices into a cohesive, powerful approach. To insure coherence, the Team began designing SALT by constructing the principles for its approach. SALT was not intended to be a new project, but a new, comprehensive approach to accountability. The ideas behind SALT are relevant to any discussion about improving student performance in Rhode Island. We can begin now and we should.

RISAT believes it is crucial to have a pilot year during which these ideas and proposals would be discussed, debated and made operational. Pilot, planning and discussion activities for that year are proposed under Next Steps.

## **What *Blueprint* Does**

RISAT constructed this document, *SALT: A Blueprint*, to present several perspectives on SALT. *Principles and Constructs* presents the conceptual constructs of SALT. This includes definitions of accountability and other key terms, the ten principles behind SALT, and expositions on the network of school-accountability, support, intervention and measurement.

*The Structures and Processes for Implementation* presents the Team's recommendations for each element of SALT and what needs to be done to establish it. Elements include establishing school-based accountability, designing the School Visit, and defining RIDE's role in making the implementation of SALT productive.

*Next Steps* requires no explication.

## PRINCIPLES AND CONSTRUCTS

This major section of *Blueprint* presents many of the ideas about the purpose and structure of accountability that have been incorporated in the design of SALT.

### **The Challenge of Accountability**

There is no doubt that Rhode Island citizens and educators want the academic performance of Rhode Island students to improve dramatically. There is also no doubt that Rhode Island citizens believe that, if educators were accountable in legitimate ways for what happens in Rhode Island schools, school performance would dramatically improve. Finally, it is clear to all that the State's current way of holding schools and educators accountable is not working. In fact, the practices that might be called the State's accountability system are not well organized and some actually detract from efforts to improve student performance.

As RISAT considered the existing approaches to accountability, sifted through research about what is possible and debated what new approaches made the most sense, we began to understand why accountability has generated so much frustration for educators and citizens in the past. Its serious short-comings include:

- The use of indirect and imprecise measures for student, school and district performance
- The tendency to misuse and overuse standardized tests
- The narrow nature of the information being gathered about schools
- The lack of good ways to connect what schools do to what their students learn
- The inclination to control and “get” schools, rather than to improve or support them

- The unrealistic reliance on many mandates to enforce good education
- The faddish, transitory nature of many school improvement projects.

Since the ideas and procedures of accountability define the basic relationships between schools and their governing agencies, the accountability system design will determine the success or failure of implementing Rhode Island's Goals 2000 plan. We realized we had to come to a clearer understanding of accountability and how it could work well.

Our starting point for defining accountability was the Rhode Island State Constitution, which asserts that public schools exist for:

*The diffusion of knowledge, as well as virtue, among the people [which is] essential to the preservation of their rights and liberties.*

The Constitution charges State government (specifically the General Assembly):

*to **promote** public schools, and to adopt all means which they deem necessary and proper to secure to the people the advantages and opportunities of education.* (emphasis added)

Virtually unchanged since 1842, this constitutional language continues to offer a working foundation for a state-wide system of education accountability.

We concluded that **effective accountability focuses on an institution and on the use of information to improve that institution's performance. The institution that concerns us is the school, defined as the students, teachers, administrators and staff that comprise it, and the parents and community that are part of it.** We became convinced that effective accountability must:

- Be rooted in the public responsibility of educators
- Focus on improving teaching and learning
- Take seriously the practice of teaching and the professionalism of teachers
- Accept the importance of schools as people-directed organizations
- Construct new ways to learn about what counts in schools
- Provide effective support to improve the quality of teaching and learning in schools
- Stimulate and engage the public in the issues of public education.

While defining accountability is easy, constructing a system of effective accountability practices for schools is not. RISAT proposes in this document a new way to define and put the pieces of accountability together so that they will work and will support improving student performance.

This is RISAT's report to the State. We succeeded in designing a new way to put accountability together. We call our new approach School Accountability for Learning and Teaching or SALT. SALT is ready for public discussion and we believe that such discussion will strengthen our proposals. We believe SALT gives new impetus to the charge of our State's Constitution.

## Principles

RISAT's first task was to establish the principles for SALT that would serve as reference points for the design. The resulting principles should serve as a useful template in other policy discussions at the state, district and school level about how to make accountability more effective. We believe that SALT should be subject to review and revision over time. These principles will provide a basis for SALT's monitoring of itself.

After careful crafting through several revisions and discussions, RISAT reached consensus in affirming the principles.

### **1. GAPS IN STUDENT PERFORMANCE SHOULD BE CLOSED.**

Students can now leave Rhode Island schools without the skills and knowledge that will be vital for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Educators must work to improve the skills and knowledge of every Rhode Island student to close the gap between what students now know and can do and what students will need to know and be able to do. In addition we now see performance gaps that are tied to wealth, gender, racial/ethnic background, special needs. A major goal for Rhode Island public education is to eliminate these gaps. The accountability system must be designed to inform and drive efforts that close all these gaps.

### **2. CLOSING GAPS IN STUDENT PERFORMANCE DEPENDS ON STRENGTHENING THE PROCESS OF TEACHING AND LEARNING IN THE CLASSROOM.**

To raise student performance it is necessary for teachers to become more effective in their classrooms since that is where teaching and learning actually happen. The accountability system must help each teacher understand how each student learns. It must help each teacher teach better. Finally, it must make clear whether or not the teacher has the resources necessary to do the job.

### **3. TO STRENGTHEN CLASSROOMS IT IS NECESSARY TO IMPROVE SCHOOLS.**

As institutions, schools bear the major responsibility for what goes on in their classrooms. To strengthen learning and teaching, schools must know what is happening in their classrooms and use what they know to improve the quality of the learning and teaching provided there. The accountability system must push schools to be more

responsible for becoming better places for students to learn. The system should make clear to everyone whether or not effective teaching and significant learning is occurring in each Rhode Island school.

**4. USE STANDARDS TO PUSH SCHOOLS AND STUDENTS TOWARD BETTER PERFORMANCE.**

RIDE and the school districts should recognize that the standards they set for student learning and the expectations that schools actually hold for their students are different. These expectations can either push students forward or hold them back. Research shows that school-based expectations – a school’s “actual standards”– most directly affect student learning. The new accountability system must use standards to focus attention on raising a school’s actual standards for both students and teachers.

**5. SPECIFY PROGRESSIVE STEPS FOR HOW SCHOOL DISTRICTS AND RIDE SHOULD INTERVENE TO IMPROVE A SCHOOL.**

The accountability system must enable local school districts and RIDE to be instrumental in raising the actual standards of a school. With an emphasis on incentives these agencies should create policy that supports school improvement by specifying incentives for good practice and disincentives for bad practice. These policies should also specify how these incentives and disincentives may become progressively stronger if a school fails to add to the learning of its students over a given period of time. Closing a school for non-performance should be included as the last step.

**6. ACQUIRE USEFUL INFORMATION ABOUT WHAT IS HAPPENING IN SCHOOLS.**

The quality of knowledge about schools and what is happening in them will determine how effective accountability will be for improving them. An information system that pushes towards continuous school improvement will be based on assessment of student progress. It will also generate knowledge for making valid judgments about the quality of actual conditions at a school. Finally, it will provide information to determine whether district and State policies support school improvement.

**7. SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AS INTEGRAL TO THE ACTUAL WORK OF TEACHERS AND SCHOOL STAFF.**

Strategies to improve the practice of teachers and school staff are most effective when they are grounded in an analysis of a particular school's strengths and weaknesses. The accountability system must provide the core of knowledge for that continuing analysis. It will provide a mechanism for assessing continuously how staff development efforts are raising teachers' standards and improving their practice.

**8. USE STATE MANDATES TO PROTECT BASIC RIGHTS OR TO PROMOTE TEACHING AND LEARNING DIRECTLY.**

State mandates, such as the Basic Education Program, should do no harm and should be clear, consistent and minimal. Mandates must protect the rights, health and safety of students. They must have definite links to the conditions necessary for improving learning and teaching.

**9. INCLUDE IN THE ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM ALL AGENCIES THAT CREATE AND SHAPE POLICIES THAT INFLUENCE SCHOOLS.**

The system must clarify the responsibilities of all the major groups that influence teaching and learning, including the State legislature, school boards, health and human service agencies, local school districts, town councils and RIDE. These groups should have ways to measure their impact on improving learning and teaching. They should specify how they will use these measurements to hold themselves accountable. The accountability system should supply information critical to these agencies for creating and shaping policy. It should also specify opportunities for families, students, unions, teacher training institutions, professional associations, the business community and citizen groups to join in the concerted effort to improve schools.

**10. SUPPORT PUBLIC DISCUSSION OF THE STANDARDS AND PRACTICES OF RHODE ISLAND SCHOOLS.**

Accountability must connect educators to the public. The system must include effective reporting that informs Rhode Island citizens about the realities and possibilities for education in order to stimulate much greater engagement of the public in improving public education.

## Definitions

The OTL Team noted in its *SAIL* report, which defined the charge for the Accountability Team: “The accountability discussion can be slippery and confusing. We must work to keep the discussion as simple and as straightforward as possible.” To that end, we offer a brief history of the working definitions of the key terms for SALT.

### ACCOUNTABILITY

Educational accountability, as we know it, is a set of ideas, mandates, responsibilities, measurements, knowledge and consequential activities. Accountability is normally part of the relationship between schools and the government agencies that fund and support them. The prime assumption is that, since the government agency makes funds available to schools, its public imperative is to make sure that public money is well spent. Thus, government must make schools perform well.

We believe that accountability that starts with the State’s public responsibility to “promote” education for all of its citizens has a much stronger base than accountability that starts with the relationship between schools and their funding agencies. Thus, accountability should refer to the responsibilities that RIDE, school districts and the schools have to the public. As this approach requires all parts of the education system to work together toward a vital public goal, RIDE must assume state-wide leadership for this enterprise.

Current research shows that this position is not merely a desirable ideal, but that, in reality, it is effective. Schools are more likely to improve when they are part of a state system that rigorously supports and critiques their work.

As RISAT’s work progressed, we needed a more operational definition of accountability that focused on the characteristics of the system and the process we were designing. We considered the following definition suggested by Dr. Andrew Porter, for an *accountability system*: “It holds institutions

accountable. It collects information on a regular basis. There is a formal exchange of information about whether an institution is doing well or not. And some kind of consequences are understood.”

This neutral definition of accountability posed some difficulties for our work. For example, we thought it was important for any system of accountability to be subject to change and refinement. That is, as a system that is not inherently neutral, school accountability can have both positive and negative consequences on the education process. Our objective was to build a system that would have as positive an impact as possible on improving schools. To keep the accountability system in perspective, we first established the principles we would use to build and judge it.

Education is not like a business whose products or services may become outdated or unneeded. The state’s responsibility for educating its children continues, whether its individual schools are succeeding or not. To exercise this responsibility the State must support continuous, effective improvement of its schools. Thus, a state-wide accountability system must be built to provide effective support for school improvement. Improvement is inherent to what accountability means in public education.

We were struck by how important information and knowledge are to any accountability system that serves a democracy. It is the power of persuasion, not the coercion of regulation, that best ties a governmental agency to its schools. As persuasion rests on information and knowledge, the methodology for collecting and garnering them becomes critical.

Considering all of this, we decided to define accountability for the purpose of SALT as “the use of information to improve an institution.”

## **STUDENT PERFORMANCE**

Principle 1 states that closing gaps in *student performance* is the central goal for accountability. *Student performance* is a measurement or expression of student learning. It can be a standardized test score, an authentic

assessment task or a report card grade decided by a teacher. The principle requires that there be some standard of performance against which the student can be rated. Students are compared reliably and validly against this standard, whether it is an ideal criterion, the actual performance of other students or a judgment about what the individual student should be able to achieve.

### **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

We deliberately combined the two words “teaching and learning” to underscore the fact that we usually think of them as separate.

When educational accountability separates teaching from learning, it assumes that student performance is the sole measure of success; what teachers do is not a direct concern. We suggest that this degrades the value of a teacher’s work. Schools will improve only when teaching improves.

Measuring student performance is an indirect measure of the activity of teachers — teaching. Students are not directly accountable for school performance. They are not adults. They are not usually paid to learn.

Further, their test scores do not directly change teaching practice. Teachers are adults who as paid professionals can be held accountable. Teachers are responsible for making their practice as good as possible. A teacher can change his or her teaching practice.

We strongly agree that student learning is the basic function of schools. We agree that the public and its educators want results that indicate student performance is improving. We agree that good teaching cannot be defined without considering how well it meets the educational needs of students and how well it stimulates their learning.

Linking teaching and learning makes good sense. This is closer to what happens in an actual classroom than separating these processes. Good teachers are always aware of how much and how well their students are learning. A good teacher uses this direct feedback about student learning to

refine continually his/her teaching. Thus, the Team believes that SALT must focus on *teaching and learning* together. Teaching is what teachers as professionals do; it is what schools provide. The only meaningful way to judge if teaching is successful is to determine whether students are actually learning. But to consider student learning alone warps the accountability system and considerably weakens it as an instrument of school improvement.

### **SCHOOL PERFORMANCE**

Research supports that how schools function as institutions is important and that this directly affects how teachers teach and how students learn. Thus, when schools are held accountable, their performance as institutions must be considered. The school's performance in providing good teaching and learning is the central concern. SALT first makes the school accountable. This focus on school performance requires measuring the quality of the learning **and** teaching the school provides.

The quality of teaching and learning that a school, as an institution, provides its students is a much more productive focus for a state system of accountability than schemes that focus on the evaluation of the performance of individual teachers. Individual teacher evaluation should continue to be an important function of districts. By considering the quality of teaching and learning that a school provides its students we focus productive attention on how a school faculty works together and on what the important influences are that the school, as an institution, has to affect the quality of what it provides.

We believe that the best measure of a school's performance will reveal what a school has added to the knowledge and skills that a student brought when he or she came to the school or acquires outside of school. This is the educational value the school has added. This measurement of school performance considers the educational growth of students. It uses the level of a student's performance when he or she entered the school, as the base line, and computes growth over a designated time period. School comparisons can then

be based on what schools have done and not on absolute levels of student performance that include many factors that are not school related. Actual student growth compared to expected student growth also gives an indication of what the school has contributed. We hope that the techniques for determining value added can be made simpler and easier for school practitioners and the public to grasp. That would make value added even more useful and legitimate as a concept in data analysis.

### **DISAGGREGATED DATA**

In the past schools have reported the results of their performance by averaging together all their students' scores. This practice of reporting data conceals critical patterns in understanding student performance.

For example, to understand the value of a new reading program for second graders, one might establish two categories of second graders: those who have participated in the new reading program and those who haven't. By comparing scores of the two groups, it is possible to learn whether the reading program has made a difference. If the scores for these two groups were lumped together into one group, it would be difficult to ascertain whether a student's participation in the reading method made any difference or not.

Disaggregating data is important in the study of student performance because it allows a much more precise analysis that in turn makes it possible to influence results by changing practice. In addition, disaggregating data on student background factors, such as wealth, gender, ethnicity and linguistic background makes it possible to determine how policy and practice are affecting issues of equity.

When we discuss data about school and student performance, we intend for the information developed by schools, local districts or the State to be disaggregated so that important differences in student background factors are not hidden in the presentation.

**FAMILY**

We recognize that parents and family are the single most important source of nurturing and informal learning for a person across the life span. We define family as the natural parents or the many different individuals and groups who have or take primary responsibility for the nurturing, care and supervision of children. We use the term family instead of parents to include the many different individuals or groups who assume primary responsibility for nurturing children.

**SCHOOL**

A public institution of learning, a school includes the students, teachers, administrators and staff who comprise it, and the families and community who are part of it.

## **Network of School Accountability**

While the actions of teachers and schools are the central focus of accountability, they are not the only accountable actions. Consistent with Principle 9, what schools know how to do and what they are able to do is shaped by other agencies, including school districts, state and federal governments, unions, community-based groups, the business community, professional associations, reform groups and teacher training institutions. Effective accountability, built upon a focused network, will outline the responsibility of each group. This will ensure a comprehensive structure that focuses on good teaching and learning in schools and that supports them.

### **SCHOOLS**

#### **Teachers**

Improving the daily work of teachers is the most powerful way to close gaps in student performance. The life circumstances of a student has a strong impact on how that student performs. Many of these circumstances are beyond the school's reach. Even though a school cannot change the circumstances in a student's life, this must not serve as an excuse to weaken a teacher's basic responsibility to a student. A teacher's responsibility is to address directly the problems and difficulties a student presents in learning, whatever those difficulties might be. That student must have the opportunity to reach the same high expectations that the system holds for all students.

It is important to remember that teachers and schools do not have as much autonomy as many other professionals and institutions. Both schools and teachers are surrounded by mandates, agencies, and organizations that regulate their actions. The most powerful regulation is the control of resources schools need to provide the necessary opportunities for teaching and learning.

Those who influence teacher and school performance must be clear about their responsibility for improving performance. It is only in the context of an

agreed upon and functional network of responsibilities that improvement is ensured.

The teacher responsibilities that relate mostly to accountability and assessment:

- Teachers should have clear expectations for **all** their students to learn and do well. Teachers should discuss these expectations explicitly and directly with each of their students. They should make it clear to each student how his or her work measures up to the expectations.
- Teachers should regularly assess student work with each of their students so that each student's progress, any remaining gaps in his or her performance and the prescribed steps to close those gaps are clear to both of them.
- Teachers should use effective instructional and assessment strategies in their classrooms to strengthen student learning and improve student performance.
- Teachers should use their understanding of how their students learn and how well they are learning, placing special concern on where the gaps are greatest, to change the substance and approach of their instruction so that each student is more likely to meet expectations.
- Teachers frequently should reflect on the quality of their work and build their knowledge of teaching on practice that has proved effective in other settings or that has worked for them in their classrooms. Effective approaches to a teacher's reflection and building knowledge about practice include professional discussions of student progress, mentoring, peer coaching, self-evaluation, applying research findings and conducting action research.

- Teachers should ensure that their school's professional development plan is connected to actual issues they face. They should also make sure that their own professional development plans are focused on improving student outcomes and are linked to their school's improvement plan.
- Teachers should work at the school level to revise instruction, school policies and the use of resources to meet student needs better, based on their particular knowledge of how students are and are not meeting school expectations.
- Teachers should regularly discuss expectations about a student with that student's family.

### **School Administrators**

School administrators have the leadership responsibility to strengthen the effectiveness of accountability in their school as fully as possible so that student performance is improved. This responsibility requires the administrator to look inward to the school in order to lead a school-based inquiry and to look outward to ensure that outside influences will be as supportive of the school's dynamics as possible.

- School Administrators should create the climate for school-based inquiry. This includes continuously examining the practices and data within the school, continuous improvement based on the school's improvement plan and continuous professional development to improve teaching practice.
- School Administrators should create procedures that allow teachers to discuss their expectations for student learning both within and across grades to ensure that practice in the school is always moving closer to meeting the school's high standards.

- School Administrators should lead the school in preparing for the School Visit and should work to ensure that the Visit benefits the school.
- School Administrators should manage the school's response to demands and requirements of outside authorities to improve the school's teaching and learning performance.
- School Administrators should connect with local civic, community, cultural and business organizations to consider how their perspectives and resources can move the school forward.
- School Administrators should publish an annual, critical review of the school's progress in closing gaps in student performance and its plans to improve. They should report unmet challenges and unsolved problems, as well as successes. Reports on student performance are necessary, but insufficient. Student performance must be associated meaningfully with teacher and school practice. The report should include the school's plans for the coming year to improve teaching and learning.

This review should be the focus of a local meeting of parents and citizens in the community of the school. After incorporating revisions based on that meeting, the school should submit a final report to its district's school committee.

- School Administrators should ensure that each teacher's performance is monitored consistently according to the guidelines for teacher appraisal of that school district. Teacher appraisal is not part of the scope of the accountability visits. It is discussed further below.
- School Administrators should ensure that the individual teacher professional development plans are consistent with the school's improvement plan.

- School Administrators should ensure that adequate resources are available to provide the professional development opportunities that support individual teachers and that are consistent with the school's plan.

### **Staff**

The other members of a school's staff, including clerical and building maintenance staff; lunch room workers; special teachers; guidance counselors; attendance officers; nurses, psychologists and volunteers play critical roles in setting the tone of the school as a learning community.

- Staff should explicitly consider and plan their work with an awareness of how what they do affects the school's performance as a learning institution.
- Staff should ensure that their concerns are part of the school's improvement plan.

### **Students**

Increasing a student's responsibility for his or her learning is a desired outcome, rather than a demand in SALT. This is because SALT assumes that schools need to assist students in developing their capacity to be responsible for their own learning. SALT seeks to promote conditions in which students can learn habits of self-assessment and strategies that continuously strengthen their ability to learn.

Increasing the ability of students to be responsible for their own learning is probably the single most important purpose of everyone in the network.

- Students should learn to assume an ever increasing responsibility for their learning. They should learn to respond well to being pushed; they should learn to help other students by pushing them to assume higher levels of responsibility for their learning and behavior.

- Students should be able to assess their own learning in relation to worthy standards. They should see this as a necessary step to a higher level of understanding and performance. They should also learn to provide appropriate feedback to their teachers and the school about the teaching that is provided.

### **Families**

Families of students should expect to participate fully in setting plans for their students and assessing their progress. Lack of family participation, however, should never be reason to penalize a student.

- Families should expect to be informed about the progress of their children in school.
- Families should expect to be informed about the strengths, difficulties and progress of their schools.
- Families should be expected to be involved in establishing and supporting the processes for school-based accountability, including the Visit.
- Families should expect to serve as critical advocates for the education of the children in their community. This could include participation on School Visit Teams.

## SCHOOL GOVERNING AGENCIES

### Districts

Because they are at the heart of school governance in Rhode Island, local districts must discharge their critical responsibilities well, if accountability is to work.

- Districts should create opportunities for local, public critical review of the expectations that schools hold.
- Districts should prepare an annual report to their communities about their progress in challenging and supporting their schools to improve teaching and learning. They should report unmet challenges and unsolved problems, as well as successes. Reports on student performance are necessary, but insufficient. Student performance must be meaningfully associated with teacher and school practice. The report should include the District's plans for the next year to improve teaching and learning.
- Districts should coordinate their data collection and analysis activities with both local schools and RIDE to ensure useful, consistent and valid information about what is happening in schools.
- Districts should provide the district level coordination necessary for the School Visits. Districts should participate in the post-visit analysis. They should commit specific support to the local school to help it improve its practice.
- Districts should promote and coordinate an ongoing process for setting and reviewing standards for student performance, as well as requirements for high school graduation. That process should include community participation.

- Districts should ensure that each school sets challenging school performance goals.
- Districts should be fiscally accountable to their communities for using tax dollars to provide the best educational opportunities possible. This includes hiring and retaining the best qualified and most promising teachers and administrators; consistently evaluating their effectiveness in improving teaching and learning; and setting policy that promotes continuous school performance assessment and improvement. It also includes allocating resources in a manner that supports the goals and improvement plans of each school in the district and that seeks to close performance gaps between schools.
- Districts should model and support professional development that contributes directly to school improvement by respecting the interests and addressing the needs of each of their schools and teachers.
- Districts should build and nurture community support networks for education programs, including strengthening collaborative arrangements with other internal and external providers of student services.
- Every district should include in its planning the strategies the district will use to meet the needs for support identified in the improvement plans of its schools. The emphasis here is on how the district tailors its support of individual school needs based on the plans developed by each school.

**RIDE**

RIDE must take leadership responsibility for SALT. This includes continuously clarifying SALT's purposes and procedures to interested parties around the State; managing SALT's centralized procedures with balance and efficiency; and assessing SALT as a system to ensure that it is being continuously developed as a tool for improving student performance and that it is becoming more effective as it matures.

- RIDE must manage SALT well. This includes building it efficiently into the RIDE structure, paying careful attention to how it is developed in the early years, and ensuring that it is reviewed critically.
- RIDE should develop protocols that are straight forward and effective for school based-inquiry, for the School Visit and for the training of Visiting Teams.
- RIDE should provide effective, coordinated school support based on SALT. RIDE's support, coupled with coordinated support from the districts, is critical to SALT.
- RIDE should provide sensible procedures and find good technological solutions to coordinate and manage the collection, analysis and reporting of information about teaching and learning at the school, district and state levels.
- RIDE should provide the Board of Regents and the General Assembly with information that meets their needs and that continues the discussion about how to provide the best education possible in the State.
- RIDE should explain SALT to the public and engage the public in important discussions about the problems and possibilities of Rhode Island education.

- RIDE should take the necessary steps to set a revised framework of mandates in place.
- RIDE should cooperate with districts to create a process that calibrates local results with the results of the state testing program.
- RIDE should determine how SALT will replace the school approval process.
- RIDE should monitor State policy and program development to ensure maximum equity and access for all students, as well as to ensure it effectively closes the gaps in performance between schools and districts.

### **The Governor**

Since the United States Constitution places the responsibility for education with the states, the Governor plays a critical role in making the educational system work effectively. The Governor must provide leadership to the Network of School Accountability. Through regular RIDE briefings, SALT should provide information on the state of education in Rhode Island for the Governor so that he is more able to exercise thoughtful leadership.

- The Governor should begin to include a section on schools and public education in the annual State of the State speech. Reviewing the annual report of the Commissioner of Education will help solidify this tradition.

### **General Assembly**

The Rhode Island Constitution makes clear that the General Assembly is responsible for establishing and maintaining public schools in Rhode Island. It is the State Assembly's responsibility to find a more comprehensive approach to setting the State's education policy than acting on the specific bills presented each year. The Assembly needs to develop a greater capacity for sustaining a continuous discussion about what schools can and should do.

This discussion would provide information for key policy and funding decisions.

SALT would be designed to provide better information to the Assembly than is now possible. For example, the briefing reports for the Governor might well go to all General Assembly members, or at least to its leadership. The annual reports from schools and districts would go to their respective legislators.

- The General Assembly should reform the state education finance system to provide resources that meet the needs of schools and that improve their performance. Without adequate resources, accountability ends up as a cruel joke, unfair to schools and to teachers, and destructive to the process of actually improving teaching and learning.
- The General Assembly should require the Board of Regents to include an assessment of SALT in its annual report to the Assembly with recommendations for SALT's continued improvement. Resources should be provided to the Board of Regents to assure that the SALT assessment is not a perfunctory matter.

## **OTHER ORGANIZATIONS**

### **Teacher Unions and Teacher Organizations**

Perhaps the most important shift that SALT presents is the recognition of the importance of the teacher's role and his or her teaching practice. This shifts the leverage for changing schools from introducing new programs and projects into the school's organizational structure to shoring up what teachers do by insisting that their daily work is respected and that it is seen as the legitimate focus for improving student performance. The quality of teaching practice depends on the knowledge, skills and judgment of the people who teach. This view of teachers as professionals greatly increases both their importance and their responsibility.

Viewing teachers as professionals requires a dramatic reexamination of the position of teacher unions and teacher organizations. Complementing their function of protecting teachers in their struggle with educational management, they would need to increase their provision of professional leadership in developing skills and knowledge. This shift suggests that teacher organizations would be proactive leaders in the conversation about education improvement.

SALT provides an opportunity for these professional organizations for teachers to align themselves with the public interest. The general public, and parents in particular, believe teachers should be invested in the practice of their profession. SALT endorses that. Teacher organizations would be positioned to provide leadership in training and research that would promote teaching as a profession and a skill.

### **Regional Collaboratives**

Regional Collaboratives are expected to be designed to maximize the efficient use of resources among member schools and districts.

- Regional Collaboratives should reconfigure their services in light of SALT. SALT raises two planning questions for Regional Collaboratives: How will they support improvement of teaching and learning? Can that support be more efficiently delivered through a collaborative arrangement or directly by the districts?
- Regional Collaboratives should play a critical role in improving communication, in generating consistent data across districts, in providing school-based professional development efficiently and possibly by coordinating the School Visits.

### **Higher Education**

Colleges and universities exert considerable influence on what happens in schools. They are the institutions that most clearly define knowledge and its use. Their admission standards set powerful expectations for student

performance. They provide all of the pre-service teacher education and much of the in-service education for practicing teachers. They affect the standards of good teaching by the models and practices they use.

- Colleges and universities should redesign pre-service and in-service teacher and administrator education so the focus is squarely on teacher performance, not on student seat time. An increased emphasis on teachers assessing student learning is particularly important.
- Colleges and universities should find ways to collaborate much more fully in the life of public schools in order to improve the practice of teaching within the schools, as well as at the college itself.
- Those colleges and universities exploring establishing professional development schools should be encouraged in their efforts and others should consider establishing professional development schools.
- Colleges and universities should adapt admission policies so that a variety of school-based ways to assess student performance are acceptable, not only completion of Carnegie units.

## **THE PUBLIC**

### **Community**

Principle 10 explicitly requires SALT to inform the public and stimulate its discussion about education. That will be greatly advanced if the community moves forward to accept what it can do to improve schools. At some basic level it is the community that is ultimately accountable for the quality of its schools.

- The community should take responsibility for the welfare of children in the community as a whole. The community should

demonstrate its strong and active interest in the work of schools and the performance of its students.

- The community should hold public forums that address its real questions and concerns. It should expect SALT to provide information that is simply and well presented and that directly addresses issues of school improvement.
- The community should expect its local schools and district to provide annual reports and forums in which their progress is fully discussed.
- The community should recognize that, if schools are to perform well at their primary task of teaching and learning, their responsibility for the total care and support of children and youth will be limited. The community should insist that other student needs be provided through careful and efficient coordination between the school and other family and youth serving agencies.
- The community should participate in school improvement teams and School Visit teams.
- The community should participate in its school's processes for assessing student and school performance.
- The community should celebrate excellence and provide rewards and incentives for schools, teachers, and students.

### **Business**

The responsibilities of the business community are largely encompassed in the community section above with the exception of several specific areas related to the transition between school and work.

- Businesses should pay attention to a student's school performance in their hiring process. This does not imply that they should require a specific grade point average, but that students should know their

school performance is important. The introduction of the Certificate of Initial Mastery, as well as incipient school-to-work programs, will provide important new focuses for business.

- Business should engage in discussions with teachers and school administrators to ensure that the skills that are useful to jobs are part of what the school provides. This includes active discussion about the focus and level of standards for performance.

## **School Support and Intervention**

The Network of Accountability asserts that schools must have the support of many different people and groups, who each take their responsibilities seriously and who work in concert with the schools. The critical focus here, which is critical for SALT as a whole, is that there must be a deliberate effort to provide schools with effective support and intervention, with the emphasis on support. Although both the districts and RIDE play key roles here, universities, advocate groups, and technical assistance organizations also have important roles.

RISAT concluded that effective school intervention and support must first of all focus on improving each school's teaching and learning. Thus, support is focused on the classroom. This support must first be based on knowledge about a particular school, including knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the learning and teaching that happen there. The main source of this knowledge is the school's self-study and the Visit. Second, this support must be based on knowledge about effective practice, both from academic research and teacher-based research about what has proven to work well. This knowledge will make it possible to tailor effective support for a particular school. Because good support must be an ongoing process, it requires continuously assessing a school's progress, its problems and its strengths. Slow, meaningful improvement in incremental steps is better than short, quick leaps that lead only to frustration.

A school that shows improvement should be rewarded. The school's community, its district and RIDE should recognize the school's efforts, congratulate the school for its accomplishments and expect improvement to continue. The school district and RIDE should develop incentive programs that would include: public praise for good school practice; unassigned time for teachers and administrators to spend with their colleagues; membership in a network of improving schools; using teachers and administrators, who demonstrate good practice, as resources for other schools; monetary rewards

from a special fund for a school to use in accordance with its improvement plans.

SALT is built to make it difficult for a school to fail. Nevertheless, some schools will be unable or unwilling to improve. Since the first responsibility of the State of Rhode Island is to provide good education for all its children and students, our first public responsibility is for their welfare, not to our schools. We should not be tolerant of a school's harmful practice to children. While what is harmful is clear in matters of safety, health, and general well being, it is not as clear in matters of student performance. RISAT considers declining school performance as an indicator of harmful practice.

RIDE and the districts should design a sequence of progressive disincentives for a school that fails to improve. These steps must protect the children, who are directly involved, and allow the local district an opportunity to improve the situation. Because SALT bases its judgments about a school on what it contributes to a child's education, it is possible to base these incentives and disincentives on what a school does or doesn't in fact do.

Disincentives might include: publicizing a school's faults, mandating facilitation for improvement, setting strict time lines for improvement, requiring a second School Visit within a short time frame, monitoring by designated RIDE staff, requiring the district to weed out ineffective teachers and administrators, and finally, losing control of funds. The Commissioner, acting in the public interest, must be able to shut down or take responsibility for a school when it is clear that the school is not responding or that it is unable to perform its basic function.

## Measurement

Information and knowledge are the currency of any democratic system of accountability. Principle 6 speaks directly to the importance of measurement.

In a democratic system decisions about educational quality, as well as decisions about changes in practice, should be based upon widely available evidence about the effectiveness of past educational practice. Since evidence about the results of education practice becomes the best reason to continue or change that practice, measurement issues permeate SALT. As this evidence becomes available, it can be used along with other research findings to help other schools strengthen their improvement efforts.

Measurement generates (or expresses) what we consider as evidence. The most important evidence for improving schools is whether successful student learning is taking place and how. We define successful learning as a student closing the gaps between what he or she knows and is able to do and what he or she is capable of knowing and being able to do at a definite point in time. Consequently, a school's ability to measure whether its students are making adequate progress toward closing these gaps is at the heart of SALT.

To be useful, measurement must determine the effectiveness of what teachers do to cause student learning to take place. Generating evidence about how the action of teaching effects the action of learning is critically important. The more measurement focuses directly on the actual effect of teaching on learning without proxies for either teaching or learning (e.g. testing at a later time), the more useful the evidence it generates will be to a teacher's effort to improve practice, a school's effort to improve the education it provides and a State's effort to ensure equity.

While this does not preclude using data gathered by the current state-wide testing program, it does mean that other methods for gathering information must be developed. These methods include: teacher assessment of student learning, review of student work, systematic visits to schools to review actual practices of learning and teaching, and school-based inquiry. These methods

would differ from current practice because they would be based on shared standards, criteria for judging student work and better student assessment techniques.

Since teachers are not solely responsible for improving schools, teaching should not be the only practice measured by SALT. The actions of all agencies responsible for promoting student learning should be measured in terms of their effects on teaching and learning. The target should be the same, determining whether an action helps student learning.

This focus on tying direct action to its effect on improving teaching and learning will require creating new ways to collect evidence that is directly related to the particular educational responsibilities of a group or agency.

SALT's approach to measurement will require considerable staff and technical work if it is to be implemented well. To take seriously these new approaches to generating information about schools and to tie them to proven approaches is an important challenge. In addition, SALT requires people in the schools and on the Visiting Teams to encounter measurement issues thoughtfully as well. Throughout the enterprise there is need for efficiency and coordination.

## **THE STRUCTURES AND PROCESSES FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

SALT is not simply a series of interrelated principles and responsibilities. RISAT recommends implementing the following structures and processes -- program elements. Built from the principles, these elements are designed to meet the realities of Rhode Island education.

### **Mandates**

The Mandates Task Force first saw that the best way to proceed with Principle 8 was to reconstruct the existing mandates for Rhode Island schools, most of which are in the BEP. The group concluded that SALT offered an opportunity for a fresh start, an opportunity that should not be missed. Thus, they proposed a new, much more focused constellation of mandates attuned to SALT. The Task Force deliberately did not tackle the “special interest” mandates, believing they must be worked out with each group involved.

### **Recommendation**

The following mandates for schools and districts should be established in place of the BEP and all other extant mandates to the schools from the State, including those based in State law.

The intent of these mandates is to provide the best education possible for meeting the learning and developmental needs of each student. Efforts to establish the mandates should be deliberate in avoiding the creation of additional paper-work for schools.

This recommendation follows from Principle 8.

### **Proposed Mandates**

1. A mandate or set of mandates is necessary to protect the civil rights of students, teachers and staff; to ensure that schools establish and maintain a safe, clean environment that is appropriate for the students

- and that supports learning; and to ensure that all students in the State have an equal opportunity to participate and to benefit fully from school, regardless of their race, language, gender or disability.
2. A mandate or set of mandates is necessary to ensure that state-wide opportunities for learning, including resources provided to teachers for teaching, are reasonably equitable, yet are reasonably differentiated to match the varying degrees of difficulty in teaching assignments.
  3. A mandate of set of mandates is necessary to ensure that each school participates fully in SALT and thereby takes responsibility for the quality of the teaching and learning that school provides its students.
  4. A mandate or set of mandates is necessary to ensure that each school is taking seriously its difficult responsibility for providing an education for each of its students. Decisions about a student's program should be made by the adults who work most closely with that student. Each year the school will identify the gaps in each student's learning, as considered against the student's potential and against state, district and school standards.
  5. A mandate or set of mandates is necessary to ensure that schools have control of their own budgets and that they will be able to allocate their resources to meet the defined learning needs of their students.
  6. A mandate or set of mandates is necessary to require that school staff be qualified for their work, as defined by appropriate State certifications, which also need to be reconstructed.
  7. A mandate or set of mandates is necessary to require that schools actively promote community and parental involvement. Schools should welcome the public and be accessible to all members of the community. Nevertheless, no student will be penalized for the failure of his parents or family to participate in the process.

8. A mandate or set of mandates is necessary to replace the State's curriculum mandates with the State's newly developed curriculum frameworks. Local districts and schools may replace these frameworks and content standards with a set of locally developed content standards and frameworks that require higher levels of performance.
9. A mandate or set of mandates is necessary to require that graduation requirements will be set locally within state guidelines, that they will be performance-based, and that Carnegie units will no longer be used.
10. A mandate or set of mandates is necessary to ensure that districts will focus policy and practice on supporting school improvement consistent with SALT guidelines.
11. A mandate or set of mandates is necessary to reassert RIDE's authority to have direct access to schools for purposes of quality assurance (including state-wide measurement, the School Visits, support) and crisis intervention activities.

### **Next Steps**

1. Consider the steps that must be taken to implement the new mandates, including comparing new mandates with existing ones to determine what regulatory or legislative action is necessary to make the appropriate changes.
2. Discuss these new mandates with interest groups to reassure them that the intent is not to offset hard-won gains.
3. Present the new mandates to the schools and the public in as cohesive and direct manner as possible.
4. Ensure that each mandate passes the test of promoting improvement in the majority of schools, rather than punishing them for the few troubled schools. The overall effects of the mandates should be carefully considered rather than the implications of one rule at a time.

## **School-based Accountability**

### **Recommendation**

SALT requires each school to assume accountability for the quality of teaching and learning it provides. It is in the schools and their classrooms that the gaps in student performance will or will not be closed. The role of other key stakeholders in making this shift real is discussed above.

The assertion of this major increase in the responsibility of schools for educating their students as well as they possibly can must be supported by increased school autonomy in staffing, curriculum, scheduling and budget decisions and increased focused support from local districts and RIDE. The purpose of the support is to ensure that local schools will succeed in meeting their responsibilities.

School-based accountability comes directly from Principle 3. Principles 2, 4, 5, 6 and 7 either assume or support school-based accountability. Several of the mandates also establish school-based accountability.

### **Description**

Considering their function, as well as the latest research about what makes them work well, it is clear that the schools themselves have the first responsibility for providing the quality of education required to close gaps in student performance. This redefines the system of education by giving it focus. Rather than making the whole system responsible for student performance in a vague way, schools become the first line of accountability because they are most directly related to the performance of their students; the purpose of the rest of the system is to support them in meeting this basic responsibility.

Schools are the institutions that are closest to the action that matters: teaching and learning. The school's task is to do what it can with what it has to stimulate in its students the best possible learning. SALT should make it impossible for schools to defend any actual or perceived failure by blaming

students, the conditions in which students find themselves, parents or the support structures around them. Rather, each school should realistically assess its institutional problems in meeting this goal and use this assessment to seek directed help from the responsible agencies and its community for the important problems it faces. The district and the State must better understand schools and build structures to support them, since that is their only purpose.

The three elements we think are necessary to implement school-based accountability are:

**Local school assessment of student learning.** Each student's teachers and family should discuss what that student will be expected to learn each year. Each school should establish a way to assess each student's learning in relation to these expectations.

**School-based inquiry and school improvement plan.** Each school should set up a process of sustained school-based inquiry so that it can continuously learn about the quality and effectiveness of its teaching in relation to how well its students are learning what is expected of them. Informed by the results of its inquiry, each school will construct a school improvement plan. That plan will specify how professional development relates to improving teaching and learning. It will also specify how family and community resources will be used to support the work of the school.

**Annual progress report.** Each school should prepare a brief annual report for its community on its progress, plans and problems. This report will be distributed to families and made available to other concerned members of the wider community. Each school will hold an annual open forum for its parents and community to discuss this report and to learn the community's perceptions of its performance. After incorporating this information, the school will submit this report to the district's school committee.

**Next Steps**

1. Construct a set of guidelines for districts and schools that establish school-based accountability. Schools and districts should be directly involved. This includes new guidelines for preparing school improvement plans.
2. Develop resource material on school-based inquiry and institutional reviews focused on quality of performance in order to help schools design their process of self review.

## Assessing Student Performance

### Recommendation

The primary assessment of student performance must be carried out by a student's teachers and the school. This will replace complete reliance on standardized testing. This implies that schools must develop more rigorous and useful assessment tools. Teachers need to learn a range of techniques to add rigor to the testing they do to transform it into assessment. The State's standardized tests can serve the specified purpose of providing a context for this primary assessment. Standardized test data should be disaggregated and connected as closely as possible to the school and teacher assessments.

This recommendation is consistent with Principle 6.

### Description

Because the first purpose for student assessment is for a teacher to learn how to sharpen teaching directly so that the student will learn more, the primary assessment of student work should be done by the teachers who work directly with a student. Researchers and developers have done much work in recent years in how to do this. This should be made available to schools.

RIDE and districts should support teachers and schools as they strengthen their capacity to assess students. In particular, these agencies need to ensure that assessment techniques and their use are fair, meaningful and rigorous, as well as tied to improving teaching. RISAT also believes that a teacher's ability to make judgments about how his or her students are learning in the heat of teaching is a critical assessment skill and that this is not the same as "testing." Strengthening teachers' ability to assess learning and to make adjustments while they are teaching should not be overlooked. Student self-assessment and student assessment of teaching practice are also valuable tools.

With school assessment in place, State testing of student performance can play a useful role. First, disaggregated data can provide one important frame

to explain school-based assessment. Second, it can provide a benchmark to ensure some comparability between schools and districts. Third, it can help determine performance gaps across the state that will lead to consideration of equity issues. Finally, the state test data has a legitimacy with the public that gives it authority in explaining student and school performance.

**Next Steps**

1. Develop support for schools to set in place rigorous school-based approaches to assessing student performance.
2. Configure state testing programs to support the purposes of SALT, in particular to connect productively with school-based assessment.

## **School Visits**

### **Recommendation**

Establish a system of School Visits to ensure that school-based accountability leads to student improvement. Visits should be piloted in the 1996-97 school year and implemented over a four-year period so that every public school in the state will be visited a minimum of once every four years.

### **Description**

For many members of the Accountability Team the School Visit is the most important departure from current practice. It ties together the components of SALT; it focuses on teaching and learning in the classroom and school; and it ensures that support activities will make a difference. It generates a different kind of information that is specifically designed to help improve schools. It ties together information and support so that support strategies are more likely to result in the desired results. Finally, it involves citizens in learning much more directly about what goes on in schools and in making judgments about their value. Because the School Visit is new, we describe it in greater detail than some of the other elements.

To stimulate each school's school-based inquiry and to check its progress in improving the quality of its teaching and learning, approximately every four years a team of educators and citizens from outside the school will conduct a week-long School Visit to consider the teaching and learning practice at the school. While the school will receive guidance from RIDE in preparing for the Visit, particularly the first, the intent is that the ongoing school-based accountability work will create and sustain a culture of inquiry in the school. When that is established, it will provide the best preparation.

The Visiting Team's first objective will be to come to agreement about the quality of teaching and learning that the school is actually providing. The Team will allocate the major proportion of its time to observing teaching and learning in the school's classrooms. Based on its observations the Team will judge the quality of the school's teaching and learning practice, commend the

school for what it is doing well, recommend ways the school can improve its teaching and learning, point out to the school what it needs to do to strengthen its internal review and planning process and recommend how the school district and RIDE can best assist the school. Although the Visiting Team will not evaluate the performance of individual teachers, it will consider the effectiveness of the staff evaluation process.

The Team will present its most important findings to the school in a face-to-face meeting with the principal and the faculty at the end of the week. The school will review the Team's draft report before the final version is issued. After the report is complete, the school will host a meeting with the Team leader and representatives from its district and RIDE to discuss its immediate future. This discussion will address the school's improvement plan, based on the school's response to the Visiting Team's report. At that meeting the specific support both RIDE and the district will commit to the school will be clarified, thereby ensuring that their support will be school-based. The school support provided by the district and RIDE is a continuous process, not a one time project.

### **Next Steps**

1. Set up pilot Visits in 2-3 Rhode Island schools for 1996-97. Develop detailed guidelines for the process.
2. Engage teachers, other educators and community members for teams.
3. Design and carry out special training for Team members on the methodology of the Visit.

## **Continuous School Support**

### **Recommendation**

Establish a cost-effective approach at the district and state levels to provide each school with tailored, continuous school support that is designed to ensure that it will be able to meet the educational needs of its students, as defined by its improvement plan.

The intent here is not to create a new system of school support, but to coordinate what RIDE and the districts offer schools by connecting it directly to school needs. We expect this coordination to lead to a refinement of existing support approaches that would make them more cost-effective.

### **Description**

In order to deliver on their committed support (described above) with the maximum impact, RIDE and the districts should coordinate how that is provided. Ideally this would pull together the various state, federal, reform and local initiatives designed to support or induce school improvement. Existing efforts would be reconfigured as necessary to fit the SALT framework. Support would be based on knowledge about each school involved, as well as on knowledge from research and proven field practices. School support would include professional development planning. It would also include the system of incentives and disincentives described in Section 3.4.

School support activities should be considered for the start-up period of SALT. Schools will need thoughtful assistance in creating their school-based inquiry processes. They will also need help in developing rigorous and useful methods of student assessment.

In an effective, coordinated and cost-effective approach to support, it is valuable to break down isolation by considering teachers and schools working together. The proven observation that practitioner networks provide school

practitioners with powerful insights, knowledge, incentives and collegueship should not be overlooked.

**Next Steps**

1. Initiate a series of discussions with the districts about how they might begin a concerted effort to provide continuous school support.
2. Develop a cost effective approach to support schools in starting their self-inquiries and in helping them set in place local assessments of student performance.

## **Progressive Steps of Incentives and Disincentives**

### **Recommendation**

The Commissioner's authority to intervene in schools that continually fail should be maintained and sharpened as an impetus in the accountability system by developing a system of progressive steps of both incentives and disincentives that is consistent with SALT.

### **Description**

RISAT recognizes that, no matter how successful SALT might become, there must always be a way to take definitive action when a teacher or a school is clearly harming the education of students. The Commissioner must retain the authority to intervene in a school to assure that it is not causing its students harm. In the modern world harm includes failure to provide an education that closes gaps in student performance. SALT provides the Commissioner a much richer set of alternatives for making good judgments and for intervening in productive ways.

For example, if a school is failing, one course of action would be to watch its progress more carefully and increase the School Visits to every two years or even every year. It would be possible to increase the Visiting Team leader's responsibilities, making him or her an advocate and/or ombudsman for change in a school. The detailed information garnered from the Visit and the school's improvement plan could be reviewed more often and further improvement could be required.

Nevertheless, the prime purpose of SALT is to support good schools in providing good learning and teaching. Using the new information and program resources that SALT creates, a system of incentives and disincentives should be developed. SALT provides the Commissioner with much better information for making critical decisions and it presents more options for constructive action.

### **Next Steps**

1. A clear system of progressive incentives and disincentives should be designed using the increased capacity of SALT for effective and publicly supported intervention.

## **Teacher Performance Evaluations**

### **Recommendation**

Each district should review its policies and practices regarding the evaluation and appraisal of teachers and school administrators in order to strengthen them in light of SALT. Responsibility for assuring that the processes are useful, sensible and fair rests with the district and the school.

### **Description**

Evaluation of individual teacher and staff performance is an important process of accountability. RIDE has made recent progress on the development of new guidelines for professional development. While it is rightly beyond the purview of SALT, RIDE will monitor whether districts use effective and fair evaluation procedures. The Visiting Team will carefully check out the effectiveness of the district's approach in each school.

### **Next Steps**

1. Establish a set of guidelines for the district approach to teacher appraisal. The approach should concentrate on appraising the performance of the teacher in the classroom (or in direct work with students). Peer review will be encouraged.
2. Establish guidelines for school-based professional development.

## **School Approval**

### **Recommendation**

SALT would replace the current State program for school approval.

### **Description**

While SALT is not designed in the first instance as a school approval process, it overlaps many of the functions of that process. As it provides much more detail and substance about schools and their performance, it assures that good approval decisions would be made. SALT should replace the current School Approval in such a way so as to prevent any overlapping pressure on schools.

### **Next Steps**

1. Construct a plan to replace the School Approval process with SALT.

## **Other Audits**

### **Recommendation**

Other systemic ways of collecting information about school performance should be coordinated with SALT.

### **Description**

Though limited, the most important source of systemic information about school performance outside of the state system is the accreditation reviews of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC). What is learned from these accreditation visits should at least be coordinated with the information system of SALT. Further cooperation with NEASC should also be considered. For example, if NEASC or SALT could be modified to meet each other's purposes, it would make sense to combine the visits or eliminate one.

Other projects or organizations, e.g. Carnegie Middle Schools, collect and use information about schools. SALT should routinely use any valid information already being collected to reduce duplication and enrich the quality of its own information as much as possible. Further, it should continuously investigate other approaches to collecting school data in order to ensure that its own methodology is as good as possible.

### **Next Steps**

1. Explore with NEASC possible ways to coordinate and collaborate accreditation activities.
2. Provide an active berth in the SALT information system for information collected by other parties. This would include a check on validity and utility.
3. Explore other systems of data collection, including the possibility of using the Carnegie middle school self-study at other school levels.

## **Public Reporting**

### **Recommendation**

Establish a state-wide system for reporting to educators, families, communities and citizens on the progress and problems of schools. This responds to Principle 10.

### **Description**

SALT intends not only to inform the public about the performance of its schools, but also to stimulate public discussion. The public perception about public school quality, as well as about how much public energy is devoted to improving schools, defines in important ways the possibilities for what schools can achieve.

There will be a series of annual interconnected local school, district and State forums and reports to ensure that the ongoing public debate about education is focused on what is most important – standards, performance, and improvement.

Each school will prepare a report to its families and broader school community that addresses the issues of relevance to that community. This report will include the school's own judgment of its progress in meeting its goal of improving student performance and the problems it has encountered. Each school will host a forum for its families and community members to review that school's performance and its report.

Each district's report on its progress will include a section built upon the individual school reports. The district will report on its progress in supporting the efforts of its schools, as well as its ongoing plans. This report and the district's overall progress also should be discussed at a public session, perhaps a special meeting of the school committee to which citizens would be invited to discuss the District's progress.

In a similar manner the Commissioner of Education will prepare an annual report on the state of education in the State. The Commissioner's report

should have a section that includes a summary of the school reports and a separate section that summarizes the district reports. A third section should include an appraisal of the state's efforts, including an evaluation of the State's efforts by the districts. Finally it should set forth refined policy recommendations based on the report's conclusions. That report should be timed so that the Governor can include its recommendations in his annual State of the State address.

All reports should keep a sharp focus on student performance, improvements in teaching and the connections between them. All reports should have a candid tone that assumes public discussion of educational problems will contribute to improving schools.

This formal framework of reporting should be augmented by other ongoing efforts: focus groups, reports and discussions by civic and stakeholder groups, review by experts and specialists and in-depth reporting by the Rhode Island media. The use of new media opportunities, including web pages, also should be explored.

### **Next Steps**

1. Develop an annual reporting scheme that includes guidelines for school, district and state reports.

## **The Role of Districts**

### **Recommendation**

Require districts to establish procedures and practices that are consistent with SALT.

### **Description**

Districts play and will continue to play a critical role in shaping the performance of their schools. This element calls for each district to reconsider its own policies in regard to schools, particularly in regard to measurement, resources and support. The resulting revisions must include the district strategy for responding with commitment to local schools immediately after each visit. This should be incorporated in any strategic planning the district undertakes or is required to do.

The section of district responsibilities in the Network of Accountability should be considered here as well.

### **Next Steps**

1. Develop a roll-out plan for SALT that includes district involvement and input with the intent of generating strong district support for the principles of SALT. This includes guidelines for district planning.
2. Ask districts to report on their plans for coordinating their policies and practices to SALT, including the coordination of information collection, professional development plans and school-based support.

## **The Role of RIDE**

### **Recommendation**

RIDE must assume strong leadership for the development, piloting and implementation of SALT. This includes reshaping some of its own key functions to make them consistent with SALT.

### **Description**

While its leadership role is critical, RIDE must carry it out in such a way that it builds genuine support for SALT within the districts, the schools and key stakeholder groups. SALT is built on concepts of local autonomy and accountability.

In particular this means building SALT into the plans for the Field Service Teams and for measurement of student performance. RIDE's responsibilities as laid out in Network of Accountability above are included here as well.

Given the importance of SALT to its organization components, RIDE may want to appoint someone to be in charge of managing SALT during the pilot year. This person would report to the Commissioner and the Leadership Team.

Beyond its start up costs, SALT should be designed so it does not increase appreciably the overall dollars spent on education. This requires RIDE to consider how SALT will replace ongoing activities, particularly those in measurement, support and professional development.

For example, the School Visits will require the expenditure of new dollars. But the implementation team should consider how these Visits can meet continuing professional development requirements (e.g., the excellent experience provided teachers) in the Visit itself.

**Next Steps**

1. Decide how to manage SALT for the pilot year.
2. Consider carefully the implications of SALT for RIDE functions and staff, with special attention to measurement, field teams, and school support and professional development activities.
3. Develop guidelines for RIDE support of schools as well as its intervention in them.

## NEXT STEPS

This SALT *Blueprint* provides many details for how RISAT believes SALT should be configured. The Team concluded that it was wise to stay within their charge and not to develop a full implementation plan for SALT. Because of the wide-ranging implications of SALT for Rhode Island education, this would preclude the necessary staff work and proceed too fast without appropriate stakeholders and citizen discussion.

RISAT proposes that the following planning and pilot activities to further the development of SALT begin in July 1996.

**Pilots: School-based Accountability and School Visits.** At least two or three diverse schools, working closely with RIDE and their district staffs, will pilot the school-based accountability elements of SALT by starting a process of school-based inquiry, hosting a Visit and building an improvement plan based on the Visit.

**Public Discussion.** Public and school-stakeholder understanding and acceptance of SALT as a viable, strong and useful approach to school accountability is crucial. These groups, as well as families and concerned citizens, should be engaged in several forums and focus group activities to garner their reactions. A public media campaign should be considered. The discussions about SALT should be congruent with the activities of the Goals 2000 Panel. The purpose is not only to present its design, but to improve SALT and gain its acceptance.

**Policy and Structure Development.** At the same time RIDE, working with the districts and the schools, should continue to develop the necessary policy, structures and procedures to establish SALT well. These plans should include:

- Guidelines and protocol for school-based accountability that are informed by ongoing pilot projects.

- Guidelines and plans for supporting schools in assessing student performance.
- Guidelines, protocol and training for School Visits.
- Guidelines and coordination of SALT reporting.
- Guidelines for progressive incentives and disincentives based on SALT.

The three steps listed above would be completed during the 1996-97 school year. These activities should culminate in decisions about the policies and structures that will be necessary to put SALT into place. By June 1997 RIDE would submit a policy plan for establishing SALT. We envision full implementation would occur over a several year period. Work should progress so that the 1997-98 Regents Budget Request (October 1996) includes the cost of the first year of implementation.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

RISAT began its work in October 1995. After first establishing the principles for SALT, we worked in the four Task Groups listed below to design its key features. Finally, we reconvened as a total group to synthesize the Task Group work, to create SALT as a comprehensive system and to approve the documents. The full Team met in 14 two hour sessions. The Leadership Group, comprised of RIDE staff and state educators, met often throughout the process to guide the preparation of the reports.

### The Accountability Team

#### LEADERSHIP TEAM

Kenneth E. Fish, Chair, Director, Office of School Improvement, RIDE  
 Doris Anselmo, Office of Teacher Preparation, Certification, and Professional Development, RIDE  
 Joe DiMartino, Parent/Chair, State Advisory Council for LEP Students, West Warwick  
 Susan Lusi, Director of Policy, Annenberg Institute for School Reform, Brown University  
 Paula Milano, OATS Focus Teacher, Providence School Department  
 Rick Richards, Office of School Improvement/Outcomes & Assessment, RIDE  
 Susan Rotblat-Walker, Office of School Improvement, RIDE  
 Bob Sieczkiewicz, House Fiscal Advisory Staff  
 Thomas A. Wilson, Consultant to the Team

#### TASK GROUP ON RESPONSIBILITIES

Kenneth E. Fish\*, Director, Office of School Improvement, RIDE  
 Susan Lusi\*, Director of Policy, Annenberg Institute for School Reform, Brown University  
 Maureen Logan, English Teacher/Staff Development Coordinator, Westerly School Department.  
 Lorraine O'Connors, Foster/Glocester and Glocester Regional School Committee  
 Elaine Ruggieri, Education Consultant, Cranston, RI  
 Sharon Stark, Independent Business Consultant, Bristol, RI  
 Joyce L. Stevos, Director, Strategic Planning/Professional Development, Providence School Department.  
 Susan B. Strauss, Principal, Lincoln Senior High School, Lincoln

**TASK GROUP ON MANDATES**

Doris Anselmo\*, Office of Teacher Preparation, Certification, and Professional Development, RIDE  
Joseph DiMartino\*, Parent/Chair, State Advisory Council for LEP Students, West Warwick  
Janice Caporicci, Office of Special Needs, RIDE  
Tom DiPaola, Special Education Department, Rhode Island College  
Mary Doyle, Early Childhood Coordinator, Pawtucket School Department  
Manuela Duarte, Parent/Community Liaison, East Providence School Department  
Joseph Gaudiosi, Office of Teacher Preparation, Certification, and Professional Development, RIDE  
Doreen Medeiros, Special Education Advisory Council  
Steve Nardelli, Office of School Improvement, RIDE  
Elliot Washor, Associate, Annenberg Institute for School Reform, Brown University

**TASK GROUP ON SUPPORT AND INTERVENTION**

Paula Milano\*, OATS Focus Teacher, Providence School Department  
Susan Rotblat-Walker\*, Office of School Improvement, RIDE  
Nicolau R. Amaral, Assistant Principal, Nathan Bishop Middle School, Providence  
Anne DeFanti, Office of Special Needs, RIDE  
Judy DiMeo, Department of Special Education, Rhode Island College  
Marilyn Gounaris, Office of School Improvement, RIDE  
Roger Lemieux, Assistant Principal, Shea Senior High School, Pawtucket  
Robert Mason, Office of Workforce Development, RIDE  
Susan McGreevy-Nichols, Director of Dance, Roger Williams Middle School, Providence  
Rocco Rainone, Office of School Improvement/Skills Commission, RIDE  
Arthur Tartaglione, Office of School Improvement, RIDE  
Anthony Terceira, Administrator/Supervisor of Mathematics, Providence School Department.

**TASK GROUP ON MEASUREMENT**

Rick Richards\*, Office of School Improvement/Outcomes & Assessment, RIDE  
Robert A. Sieczkiewicz\*, House Fiscal Advisory Staff, Rhode Island General Assembly.  
David Allen, Associate, Annenberg Institute for School Reform, Brown University  
Charlotte Diffendale, Office of Instruction, RIDE  
Joan Foley, Social Studies Teacher, South Kingstown High School  
Rebekah Mizer, English Teacher, St. Xavier Academy  
Mary Beth Pike, Assistant Principal, Rogers High School, Newport  
Linda Washington, Grade 2 Teacher, Elizabeth Baldwin Elementary, Pawtucket

**TEAM MEMBERS**

Terri Adelman, School Committee Member, Barrington  
Thom Labonte, Principal, Wakefield Elementary School, South Kingstown  
Jo Eva Gaines, Regent, Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education  
Pamela Gray-Bennett, Director, New England Association of Schools and Colleges  
Mary Harrison, Regent, Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education  
Hon. Edward S. Inman, III, House of Representatives, District 41, Coventry  
Wanda Levy, HELP Coordinator, Providence School Department  
Susan Lima, Education Department, Providence College  
Fran Mossberg, ESL/Bilingual Supervisor, Providence School Department  
William Prescott, Headmaster, Wheeler School, Providence  
Stephanie Sullivan, Governor's Office, State of Rhode Island

\* Indicates Co-Leaders of Task Groups

The Team engaged Thomas A. Wilson, an educational writer, independent consultant and Research Fellow at Brown University, with years of expertise in school accountability and improvement, to help provoke and summarize discussions. He prepared the drafts of the Team's reports, which were reviewed, revised and approved by the Team.

Paula Milano wrote the vignettes which will appear in later documents about SALT.

The work of two other task forces was vital to RISAT. The OTL Team's July 1995 report, *Support and Accountability to Improve Learning* (SAIL), framed the challenge and several of the key constructs for RISAT in its design of SALT. The School Improvement and Accountability Initiative Team provided much constructive thinking about school support that is part of the SALT plan. The memberships of these two task forces follows:

## **Opportunity to Learn Team (OTL)**

Since OTL was comprised primarily of RIDE staff, this listing provides their RIDE titles as of July 1995.

### **LEADERSHIP**

Ken Fish, Co-chair, Director of Decentralization and Accountability; Bob Pryhoda, Co-chair, Director of Special Needs Services; Doris Anselmo, Teacher Education and Certification; and Susan Rotblat-Walker, Decentralization and Accountability; Thomas A. Wilson, Consultant.

### **TEAM MEMBERS**

Ginny Bilotti, Equity and Access; Janice Caporicci, Special Needs Services; Janet Carroll, Decentralization and Accountability; Amy Cohen, Instruction; Karen Cooper, MIS/Decentralization and Accountability; Ed Costa, Policy Support; Diana Crowley, Integrated Social Services; Henry D'Aloisio, Instruction; Diane Devine, Decentralization and Accountability; Charlotte Diffendale, Instruction; Rino DiMarco, Career and Technical Education; Ben Efreom, Equity and Access; Faith Fogle, Instruction; Marilyn Gounaris, Decentralization and Accountability; Jim Karon, Outcomes and Assessment; Jack Keough, Outcomes and Assessment; Susan Lima, School and Professional Services; Maria Lindia, Instruction; Bob Mason, Career and Technical Education; Steve Nardelli, Decentralization and Accountability; Rocco Rainone, Skills Commission; Susan Raisner, Special Needs Services; Rick Richards, Outcomes and Assessment; Arthur Tartaglione, Decentralization and Accountability; Frank Walker, Equity and Access; and John Wilkinson, Integrated Social Services.

## **The School Improvement and Accountability Initiative Team**

### **MEMBERS**

Karen McQuade, Representative, PTA; Judith DiMeo, Rhode Island College; Nicolau Amaral, Nathan Bishop Middle School, Providence; Paul Williams, Greater Providence Chamber of Commerce; Patricia Nolan, Providence City Council; Elaine Ruggieri, West Warwick School Department (formerly); Jack Harrington, South Kingstown School Department; Diane Santos, Grove Avenue School, East Providence; William Prescott, Jr., Wheeler School, Providence; Joyce Stevos, Providence School Department; Andrea Mattia, Edmund Flynn School, Providence (formerly); Mary Sylvia Harrison, Rhode Island Children's Crusade; Tom LaBonte, Elizabeth Baldwin School, Pawtucket (formerly); Joseph McDonald, Coalition of Essential Schools; Paula Milano, Central High School, Providence; Joan Foley, South Kingstown High School; Simon Hole, Narragansett Pier School, Narragansett; Anne Stratton, Globe Park School, Woonsocket (formerly); Lorraine O'Connors, School Committee Representative, Foster & Gloucester;

**RIDE STAFF**

Janet Carroll; Henry D'Alosio; Ann DeFanti; Diane Devine; Kenneth Fish; Marilyn Gounaris; Ellen Hedlund; Richard Latham; Maria Lindia; Rocco Rainone; Susan Rotblat-Walker; Arthur Tartaglione; Gladys Thomas; Frank Walker

**Other Resources**

The Teams tapped the expertise of many people across the nation. A collection of over forty articles that represent the best thinking on OTL and accountability were compiled by the Leadership Group and Team members.

In addition RISAT directly consulted with national experts on several aspects of our work and invited others to make presentations to the Teams. They were:

David Green, Principal Consultant to the Illinois State Board of Education,  
New York University

Joe McDonald, Director of Research, The Annenberg Institute for School  
Reform

Andrew Porter, Director of the Wisconsin Center for Education Research,  
University of Wisconsin

Marilyn Rauth from The Regional Laboratory for Educational Improvement.

Maggie Szabo, Executive Director, of the California Center for School  
Restructuring

Vermont Department of Education Staff.

Finally, the Team's work benefited from the participation of Peter McWalters, Commissioner, the RIDE Senior Leadership Team and the Goals 2000 Panel.

## REFERENCES

Ancess, J. (1996). *Outside/Inside, Inside/Outside*. New York, National Center for Restructuring Education.

Brown, C. G. (1994). *The Opportunity for All Students to Learn at High Levels*. Washington Research Association.

California Center for School Restructuring (1995). *The SB 1274 School Restructuring Protocol*. Redwood City, CA.

Centre for Education Research and Innovation, (1995). *Schools Under Scrutiny*. Paris, France, OECD.

Cuttance, P. (1994). *Building the Future: Next Steps in the Development of Quality Assurance in the NSW School System*. Sydney, New South Wales Department of School Education.

Darling-Hammond, L. (1992). *Creating standards of practice and delivery for learner centered schools*: 38.

Elmore, R. F., C. H. Abelman, et al. (1995). *The New Accountability in State Education Reform: From Process to Performance*. Brookings Institution: Performance-Based Approaches to School Reform, Washington, DC.

Felner, R., et al. (1996). *The Impact of School Reform in the Middle Years: A Longitudinal Study of a Network Engaged in *Turning-Points*-based Comprehensive School Transition*. *Preparing Adolescents for the Twenty-First Century*. R. Takanishi and D. Hamburg. New York, Cambridge University Press.

Fuhrman, S. H. and R. F. Elmore (1995). *Ruling Out Rules: The Evolution of Deregulation in State Education Policy*. New Brunswick, NJ, Rutgers.

Green, D. (1995). *Crafting a System: Accountability and Quality Assurance in Illinois Schools*. Illinois State Board of Education, December 1995.

Green, D. (1996). *The New Illinois School Quality Review Process and Reflections on Rhode Island Principles*. A presentation to the Accountability Team.

Medro, R. L. and e. al. (1995). *An Application of Hierarchical Linear Modeling in Determining School Effectiveness*. Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco.

Milano, P. (1995). *A Teacher Leadership Primer*. Chepachet, RI.

NAASP (1996). *Breaking Ranks: Changing an American Institution*. Reston VA.

Oakes, J. (1993). *New Standards and Disadvantaged Schools*. Research Forum on Effects of New Standards and Assessments on High Risk Students and Disadvantaged Schools, Harvard University.

- OTL Team (1995). Support and Accountability for Improved Learning: Enhancing Opportunities for Teaching and Learning. Providence, RI, Rhode Island Department of Education.
- Porter, A. (1993). Opportunity to Learn. Brief to Policymakers. Madison, WI, Center on Organization and Restructuring of Schools: 1-5.
- Porter, A. (1994). The Uses and Misuses of Opportunity-to-Learn Standards. Madison, WI, University of Wisconsin.
- Porter, A. (1994). Guaranteeing Good Instruction, National Governors' Association.
- Rauth, M. (1994). Opportunity to Learn Standards: Questions and Answers: A Synthesis. Andover, MA, The Regional Laboratory.
- School Improvement and Accountability Team (1995). The Guiding Principles of School Improvement. Providence, RI, Rhode Island Department of Education.
- Szabo, M. (1994). Building Habits of Effective Inquiry. Redwood City, CA, California Center for School Restructuring.
- Szabo, M. A. (1996). Rethinking Restructuring: Building Habits of Effective Inquiry. Teacher Learning: New Policies, New Practices. M. W. McLaughlin and I. Oberman. New York, Teachers College Press: 73-91.
- Traiman, S. (1993). The Debate on Opportunity to Learn Standards. Washington, DC, National Governors Association.
- University of the State of New York, The State Education Department (1992). Developing the New York School Quality Review Initiative in New York State. Albany, NY.
- Vermont Arts and Humanities Commission, et al (1995). Content Standards for Vermont's Common Core Framework for Curriculum and Assessment, State of Vermont Department of Education.
- Vermont Department of Education (1994). The Green Mountain Challenge.
- Wiley, D. E. and B. Yoon (1995). "Teacher Reports on Opportunity to Learn: Analysis of the 1993 California Learning Assessment System (CLAS)." Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis 17(3): 355-403.
- Wilson, T. A. (1995). "Notes on the American fascination with the English tradition of school inspection." Cambridge Journal of Education 25(1).
- Wilson, T. A. (1996). Reaching for a Better Standard: English School Inspection and the Dilemma of Accountability for American Public Schools. New York, Teachers College Press.
- Wilson, T. A. (1996). "On Knowing the Secret of Schools: Lessons From the British on Judging Schools With Their Complexities in Mind." Education Week(January 17, 1996): 44.

