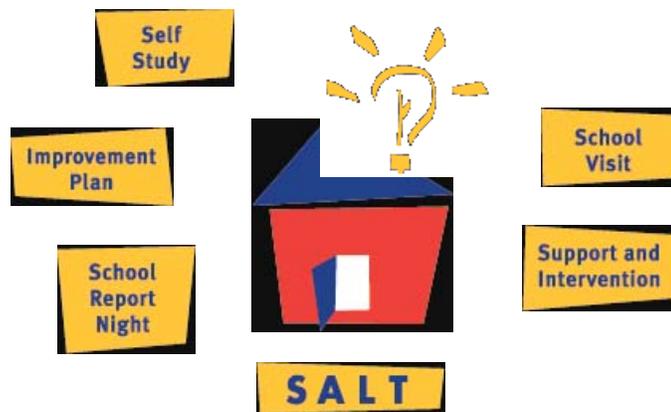


# THE SALT SCHOOL VISIT PROTOCOL

FEBRUARY 2005 (REVISED SEPTEMBER 2006)

Accredited by Catalpa Ltd. February 2005

**School Accountability for Learning and Teaching (SALT)  
Office of Progressive Support and Intervention  
Rhode Island Department of Education**



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## **BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT OF SALT**

The design and implementation of the School Accountability for Learning and Teaching (SALT) visit began in 1996. Since the SALT visit was originally conceived as part of RIDE's school-based accountability initiative, the importance of showing the validity of team conclusions is obvious. A public agency cannot make decisions about a school on the basis of "questionable" findings.

The accuracy of SALT visit findings also matter when RIDE considers them in policy development and in taking direct intervention steps in schools. They are currently used to some extent in local school planning and in planning progressive support and intervention strategies. Thus the legitimacy of the visit findings is central to any evaluation of RIDE's investment over the last seven years in the design and implementation of the SALT visit.

More detail on the history of SALT is included in Section One of the Handbook.

### **1. THE SALT VISIT, CATALPA LTD. AND Practice-based Inquiry®**

The history of the development of the SALT visit is intertwined with the history of the partnership between RIDE and Catalpa Ltd. Working with RIDE staff and Rhode Island school leaders and teachers, Catalpa designed the original SALT visit protocol in 1997. During the last seven years, working closely with the teachers who chaired the visits and with RIDE senior staff, Catalpa Ltd. has provided oversight to the evolution of that protocol. Additional Catalpa Ltd. responsibilities for SALT have included coaching the chairs and teams, providing professional development for the chairs, endorsing final reports, developing methods for cross-report analysis and studying various effects of the enterprise.

In 2005, the SALT visit protocol is in accord with the principles of Practice-based Inquiry®. Early versions were in accord with the precursors of Practice-based Inquiry® (The Foundations of the Catalpa Visit). Working with RIDE to design, implement and revise the SALT visit has been critical to Catalpa Ltd. in developing Practice-based Inquiry®.

### **2. FUNCTION OF THE PROTOCOL**

The primary function of the SALT visit protocol is to set the conditions, standards, expectations and procedures for chairs, teams, hosting schools and RIDE.

This protocol makes the design of the SALT visit inquiry public and easily accessible by teams, schools, RIDE staff and citizens. This increases the validity of the SALT visit report and the value of the visit as a process of public school accountability.

### **3. ACCREDITATION OF SALT PROTOCOL**

Catalpa Ltd. accredits this SALT visit protocol (2005). This protocol successfully builds upon the elements of the visit as inquiry, upon the structures that assure rigor and upon the procedures that assure the legitimacy of Practice-based Inquiry®.

The methodological backbone of this protocol is its consistency with the principles of Practice-based Inquiry®. If a visit team, the host school and RIDE all follow this protocol reasonably well and closely, the findings in the team's report will be accurate and important for that school, and it will have a strong claim for legitimacy.<sup>1</sup>

This protocol clearly integrates the basic elements of the visit inquiry with the structures that provide rigor in a way that does not weaken the elements but that does fulfill the inquiry purpose for the SALT visit.

This protocol meets or exceeds all specifications of Practice-based Inquiry® including those that assure legitimacy. The protocol sets clear expectations for host schools and a well developed system for the visited school to challenge its report. The protocol includes systems to certify team membership and the training of teams and team chairs.

The most important current concern is the need to strengthen the recruitment process so that it remains possible to meet the standards of the composition of team membership.

Catalpa Ltd. will review the protocol each year and inform RIDE of its continued endorsement and any issues of concern.

A review of this accreditation is scheduled for August 2007.

### **4. ORGANIZATION AND FORMAT**

#### **Sections**

The protocol is organized in general accord with the Practice-based Inquiry® outline for a protocol.

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<sup>1</sup> See *Can You Trust the Findings of a SALT Visit?* Thomas A. Wilson. In process.

## **Documents**

The protocol includes numerous documents that provide details on the design and conduct of the SALT visit.<sup>2</sup> The SALT documents are divided between:

### ***Protocol Documents (PR)***

PR documents provide further elaboration on a specific element of the SALT visit protocol. They are part and parcel of this protocol, separate for better presentation to the reader.

### ***Guidance Documents (GU)***

GU documents provide advice on how to carry out a specific element of the SALT visit protocol. Each one is directed to a specific audience, usually the chair and, less frequently, the school, team members or RIDE.

While a guidance document does not have the standing of a protocol document, there is a continuous evolution whereby advice in a guidance document becomes over time expected practice. That means it may well become part of the protocol during the next annual protocol review.

The visit is like other methods of inquiry. It improves through practice over time.

### ***Forms and letters (FO)***

FO documents do not have protocol standing, beyond the general point that the visit must be clearly managed.

### ***Packets (PA)***

These are collections of SALT documents used for specific events, e.g. team training, reading of the report, etc.

### ***SALT Guides***

SALT started publishing a set of guides for schools in 1999. Those that are mentioned in the protocol are still current.

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<sup>2</sup> **Note:** This is the comprehensive and current list of approved SALT documents. Any SALT document dated before July 2004 is not current, with the exception of some SALT Guides.

## DEFINED FOCUS

### 1. THE PURPOSE OF A SALT VISIT

The purpose for conducting a SALT visit is to generate legitimate information about how well a school is performing in advancing student learning.

The central responsibility of the SALT visit team is to build conclusions about a school's performance and to prepare a public, written report that effectively presents those conclusions. Conclusions must be accurate and useful in improving learning in the visited school. A key indication of the report's effectiveness is that the school understands what the team has concluded and begins to see what action will move it forward.

The SALT visit is designed to serve the students of Rhode Island public schools by generating legitimate conclusions about the quality and effectiveness of how well the actual daily life of schools, with a particular focus on teaching in classrooms, fosters and results in good learning. It is designed to be consistent with the principles of SALT, as defined by the Board of Regents. Those principles hold that legitimate findings about actual school practice contribute greatly to the effectiveness of school, district and state accountability and support of schools to improve student learning.

#### **SALT Protocol Documents**

SVP 2.1.0.1 PR AG Principles of R.I. School Accountability for Learning and Teaching (SALT)

SVP 2.1.0.2 PR CH Why conduct SALT visits

## 2. THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND FOCUS AREAS

The central research questions for a SALT team are:

How well are students learning?

How well are teachers teaching so that students learn?

How well does the school support learning and teaching?

The heart of the team's inquiry is to understand how well students are learning and why.

The team's inquiry is specified by three SALT foci that extend the research questions. The team is charged to write 3-7 conclusions for each focus area that answer the research question for each area:

Student Learning

Teaching for Learning

School Support for Learning and Teaching

The focus areas are nested in concentric circles with Student Learning at their center. The next circle is Teaching for Learning; the third is School Support for Teaching and Learning.

Teams are expected to link their conclusions about teaching and school support to their conclusions about learning. A team considers first how well students are learning in the visited school and then constructs conclusions that explain why students are learning at the level they are.

### **SALT Protocol Documents**

SVP 2.2.0.1 PR TM Introduction to SALT focus area

SVP 2.2.0.2 PR TM Focusing on learning

SVP 2.2.0.3 PR TM Focusing on teaching for learning

SVP 2.2.0.4 PR TM Focusing on school support for learning and teaching

### **3. OUTLINE OF THE REPORT**

The outline of the report is pre-established. The three focus areas are at the center of the outline structure. While the team has unusual control over what issues it can address within the report structure, it cannot change the outline.

#### **SALT Protocol Documents**

SVP 2.3.0.1 PR CH The importance of the written report

SVP 2.3.0.1 PR TM The report outline

#### **SALT Guidance Documents**

SVP 2.3.0.2 GU CH Contingencies when writing about leadership

SVP 2.3.0.3 GU CH How to use the report outline

## VISIT ELEMENTS

### 1. EVIDENCE

Good evidence about what actually is happening at the visited school is so important to the purpose of the SALT visit that a team must expend a large part of its total effort collecting evidence. Gathering evidence includes collecting it, describing it to the team, judging its accuracy, sorting it into important issues that make sense (given what the team knows) and building generalizations about those issues based on the evidence.

Evidence must exist in the school. It is seen, heard or read by one or more team members during the visit. Team members may use their prior knowledge and/or opinions of a school to formulate questions and to guide the team's evidence gathering. However, the team cannot use its prior knowledge of the school as evidence to support its conclusions, unless it has verified that during the visit. Unverified knowledge is considered "hearsay" evidence, and it is not admissible.

Teams must seek evidence about the action of the school--What is happening now? What are people doing now? What is the school's practice now? It must also seek out evidence about the school's perspective about what it does.

Guidance about what evidence a team should collect must be presented in the form of general issues and possible questions team members can ask school participants, each other and themselves. To prescribe precisely what evidence a team should collect would detract from the accuracy of the evidence. Such a list would limit the team's focus to a pre-conceived conceptual scheme, rather than allow the team to focus on the actual life of a particular school at a particular time.

When the team considers evidence that it has not generated, such as state test results, the SALT Survey, an accreditation report or an evaluation report of a program in the school, it must consider that evidence in a manner that is consistent with the rules that governed the collection and interpretation of that evidence. For example, the team cannot banter about test scores without regarding the discipline, procedures and rules that generated them or the decisions that give them significance.

Evidence cannot be collected as if it were separate from any generalized idea or perception that led the team to it. Yet, the team member must be

Careful that his pre-conceptions and working conclusions do not limit the evidence he collects. Thus, particularly during the first two days of a visit, team members must be aware of the ongoing tension between evidence and generalizations. They must consciously counter a forming generalization with evidence and at the same time ask if the evidence supports a different generalization.

When a team member is building a generalization, he should be hunting for evidence that challenges the generalization. When he is trying to solve a puzzle or form a new generalization to explain an issue, he should focus on collecting evidence that would either support or challenge his take on the issue.

Any team member may challenge the accuracy of any evidence that any other team member introduces in the team discussion.

Disagreement about evidence and apparent discontinuities in what the team is seeing in the school drive the team to collect more evidence to resolve the problem.

A team member must not use evidence to support a conclusion that the team, as a whole, does not accept as certain. If a team member feels that the team has made a wrong decision about the accuracy of a piece of evidence, her first task is to persuade her team members to re-examine the evidence in question.

When a team reaches final deliberated consensus agreement on a conclusion, it must again consider whether it has the evidence to support that conclusion.

### **Practice-based Inquiry® Documents**

PBI 3.1.0.1 PR CH The nature of visit evidence

### **SALT Guidance Documents**

SVP 3.1.0.1 GU TM Questioning members of the school community

SVP 3.1.0.2 GU TM Talking with students

SVP 3.1.0.3 GU TM Focusing on student work

SVP 3.1.0.4 GU TM Focusing on the school improvement plan

SVP 3.1.05 GU TM Questions for team room debriefings

## 2. PROFESSIONAL JUDGMENT

SALT visit teams must use their professional judgment to make sense of the complex, dynamic patterns of evidence that represent the real life of a school. Teams must be clear and forthright about their judgment when they write their conclusions. The conclusion must include what the team thinks so that the reader understands its perceptual base.

SALT teams must also rely on their corporate professional judgment to make decisions about a number of key inquiry questions including:

What are the important issues for this school to consider?

Is our evidence about this school accurate?

Do our conclusions and our report meet their respective tests?

Are our conclusions and report useful to this school as a tool to improve its performance in learning and teaching?

The team's professional judgment is built from the different generalized pre-conceptions and perceptions of its individual members pushed against the particular evidence of the visited school. The team's corporate, professional judgment is built through its discussion and its struggle with what team members have seen and what they think about what they have seen. The emerging professional judgment of the team holds the inquiry process together and makes the team's findings coherent.

Teams must be careful to distinguish between their perceptions and the perspectives of people in the school. Evidence about the perspectives of school participants is a critical source of evidence. The team's professional judgment grows from the early perceptions of individual members of the school.

### **Practice-based Inquiry® Documents**

PBI 3.2.0.3 PR CH How professional judgment works on a visit team

### **SALT Protocol Documents**

SVP 3.2.0.1 PR CH Action, perceptions, perspective and judgment

## **SALT Guidance Documents**

SVP 3.2.0.2 GU CH How to help the team use its professional judgment in writing visit conclusions

### **3. TEAM DELIBERATED CONSENSUS**

The SALT visit team uses deliberated consensus to make decisions that substantively determine its public findings. This includes the wording of the conclusions in the final report and its decisions on these questions:

Is the evidence used to support a conclusion accurate?

Does the wording of the conclusion represent the best judgment of the team?

Do the conclusions and the report meet their respective tests?

Any SALT team member has the power and authority to stop a decision simply by not agreeing to it. If any member does not agree with a decision and if the team sees no benefit in further discussing it, the team does not include that decision in its report. Minority reports are not permitted.

Deliberated consensus is a tool to test the team's certainty that what it reports is right. The requirement that the team agree by deliberated consensus pushes the team to resolve its own ambiguities, correct any discrepancies in its evidence, and limit the ambiguity in how it words each conclusion. Thus, deliberated consensus strengthens the underlying rigor and legitimacy of the final report.

The requirement that the team reach agreement through deliberated consensus implies that each team member must pay close attention to what every other member has to say. It pushes team members to be open about the uncertainties they see in the evidence they have found and to raise disagreements with other team members about issues of judgment. It requires team members to resolve discrepancies and work out disagreements among themselves so that they can complete their most important task—building conclusions. It pushes the team to find better evidence and to come to better decisions.

This rigor often leads team members to feel considerable team pride and cohesion. They know they have accomplished important work together, and they could not have achieved that without the difficult work of a disciplined rigor. It is the team, while it is in session during the visit, that bears the weight of responsibility for ensuring the legitimacy of the report.

Consistent with the requirements of reaching decisions by team deliberated consensus, after the team has disbanded, only the chair has the authority to edit the report. The chair is charged not to make any changes unless they are consistent with his understanding of the team's intent or explicit instructions. The chair is also limited in how much she can interpret the report for the school. The report must stand on its own.

### **Practice-based Inquiry® Documents**

PBI 3.3.0.1 GU CH Building team deliberated consensus

## NECESSARY CONSTRAINTS TO PROMOTE RIGOR

### 1. FOCUS

While *Focus* is a Practice-based Inquiry® structure for rigor, it is presented in the first section of this protocol.

### 2. DEFINITION OF CONCLUSIONS

The SALT visit is a conclusion driven process.

The team's findings are expressed in the form of its conclusions about how well the team thinks the school is doing in each of the three focus areas.

These conclusions are the basis for granting "commendations" and making "recommendations" in each focus area and for the two summary sections of the report: *Portrait of the School* and *Final Advice*.

The team must base each of its conclusions on a thorough discussion of the evidence that supports it. In its report the team must list at least two sources of evidence that accurately support each conclusion. These sources are listed in parentheses after each conclusion.

#### **SALT Protocol Documents**

SVP 4.2.0.1 PR TM Conclusions, recommendations and commendations

#### **SALT Guidance Documents**

SVP 4.2.0.1 GU CH How to lead the team in writing conclusions

### **3. REVIEW CRITERIA FOR CONCLUSIONS AND REPORT**

For a team to include a conclusion in its final report, team members must test the conclusion and unanimously agree that it:

Is important.

Is set in the present.

Is accurate.

Shows the judgment of the full team.

For a report to be declared final and complete, the team members must test the report and unanimously agree that the report is:

Fair

Useful

Persuasive

#### **SALT Protocol Documents**

SVP 2.3.0.1 PR CH The importance of the written report

SVP 4.3.0.1 PR TM Review criteria for conclusions

SVP 4.3.0.2 PR TM Review criteria for the report

#### **SALT Guidance Documents**

SVP 4.3.0.3 GU CH How to lead the team in testing conclusions and the report

## 4. SCHEDULE--TIME AND EVENTS

It is easy to see that a visit is composed of many events—the schedule of the visit, as well as the pre- and post-visit events.

Each of these events involves detailed logistics. If these details are omitted or poorly managed, they can intrude on the visit and distract both the team and the school from the central purpose of the visit. The school is also responsible for logistics. But the chair has an interest in how well the school meets its responsibility. Even if the school does not manage its side of the logistics well, the team can learn from that. But there is no benefit from this situation in reverse; it does not serve a team well to manage its logistics sloppily.

### Visit schedule

The SALT visit schedule is an important protocol element for designing the structure of the visit as a legitimate inquiry.

In order to best meet the purpose of the SALT visit inquiry, the design of the visit schedule makes deliberate use of the order of events, the allocation of limited time to different functions, the pace of the team's experience with the school and the chair's authority to control time.

The master schedule is tailored by the chair, working with the school, to fit that school's particular circumstances. Chairs understand the limits of flexibility in making changes in order to keep the design principles intact. Major changes of events require the chair to consult with Catalpa Ltd. to be sure that the change is within the limits of flexibility.

The guidance document, *How to use the visit schedule*, provides the chair with the guidance of an overall picture of how the visit is conducted.

### SALT Protocol Documents

SVP 4.4.0.1 PR CH Schedule for SALT visit

### SALT Guidance Documents

SVP 4.4.0.2 GU CH Elements behind the schedule

SVP 4.4.0.3 GU CH How to use the visit schedule

SVP 4.4.0.4 GU TM PM Notes for how to start meetings during the school visit

**Forms**

SVP 4.4.0.5 FO TM Form for Monday's schedule

**Pre-visit events**

The chair is responsible for managing these events:

***Initial phone call with the principal***

This is the chair's first official contact in her working relationship with the principal and the school. The chair completes the form: SVP 4.4.2.2 FO CH *Basic information about the school* and sends the form SVP 4.4.2.3 FO SC *What information schools provide for the Profile* to the principal.

**Protocol Document**

SVP 4.4.2.1 PR CH Initial phone call with principal

**Form Documents**

SVP 4.4.2.2 FO CH Basic information about school

SVP 4.4.2.3 FO SC What information schools provide for the *Profile*

***Initial meeting with school leadership***

This working meeting with the principal and other school leaders is key to the school's management of the visit. It introduces the school to the nuts of bolts of what the school needs to do to prepare for the visit.

**SALT Protocol Document**

SVP 4.4.2.4 PR CH Initial meeting with school leadership

**SALT Form Documents**

SVP 4.4.2.5 FO SC Teacher form for student work sample

SVP 4.4.2.6 FO SC Chair's steps for leadership meeting re: SALT visit at \_\_\_\_\_ school

***Information meeting with school staff and faculty***

The chair meets with the staff and the school faculty for an hour to explain how the visit works and to answer any questions or concerns they may have.

### **SALT Protocol Documents**

SVP 4.4.2.1 PR CH Information meeting with staff and faculty of the school

### **Post-visit events**

The chair is responsible for managing these events.

#### ***Reading the report***

The chair usually reads the report to the school faculty and staff on Thursday, during the week following the visit.

### **SALT Protocol Documents**

SVP 4.4.3.1 PR CH Reading the report

#### ***Factual Review***

The chair confers with the principal three days after the reading of the report so that the principal may identify any factual errors in the report.

(The factual review is an event in the post-visit endorsement procedures described above in the Legitimacy of Findings Section of the protocol. The guidance to schools also describes this event.)

### **SALT Protocol Documents**

SVP 4.7.1.3 GU SC How the host school can best manage the SALT school visit

SVP 5.7.0.1 PR RD Protocol for Catalpa Ltd. endorsement of SALT school visit reports

### **SALT Forms**

SVP 4.4.3.2 FO SC Letter to principal for factual review

#### ***Post visit support***

A SALT visit chair is responsible for providing a post-visit session for the school improvement team at the school on how to use the

report for school action planning. This critical step helps the school turn the report into action that is tailored to its own dynamics and circumstances.

Usually the chair who chairs the visit will not lead the post-visit session.

### **SALT Guidance Documents**

SVP 4.4.3.3 GU CH Preparing for post-visit support session

### **SALT Forms**

SVP 4.4.3.4 FO CH Post-visit support agenda

SVP 4.4.3.5 FO SC Template and example of action plan

SVP 4.4.3.6 FO SC Worksheet for developing action plans

SVP 4.4.3.7 FO CH Post-visit support feedback form

## **5. TEAM COMPOSITION, SELECTION AND TRAINING**

### **Team composition and selection**

See Section 3 in ***Procedures for legitimacy, Certification that team members meet team membership criteria***

### **Team Training**

Each chair, with the assistance of SALT staff, conducts a training session for her visit team. Each team member must attend a training session before the visit.

#### **SALT Protocol Documents**

SVP 4.5.0.1 PR CH Chair responsibilities for team training

#### **SALT Guidance Documents**

SVP 4.5.0.2 GU CH How to conduct single team training session

#### **SALT Forms**

SVP 4.5.0.2 FO CH Agenda for team training

SVP 4.5.0.1 FO RD Reflection sheet for SALT visit

### **Recruiting team members**

(In process February 2005)

## 6. CLARITY ABOUT LOGISTICS

The heart of the chair's work is guiding the team and making the countless number of decisions that become the real history of how a particular visit was conducted. The chair needs to respond wisely to a wide range of possibilities so that the team writes the report as well as possible.

### Preparations for the visit

The chair is responsible for a number of critical areas of logistics in preparing for the visit to each specific school. These include:

1. Customizing documents for that visit (e.g. the schedule of the visit).
2. Checking that the appropriate equipment, supplies and binders are ready for the visit and other events.
3. Conducting a number of events at the school before and after the visit.
4. Working with the RIDE visit coordinator to assure that a team's membership is complete and appropriate.
5. Checking with RIDE staff for information or RIDE's policy position on issues that the chair sees as important in the team's inquiry at the particular school.
6. Active discussion with Catalpa Ltd. about issues that call any aspect of the visit into question in terms of its legitimacy.

### SALT Protocol Documents

SVP 4.6.0.1 PR CH Chair preparations for a SALT visit

### SALT Forms

SVP 4.6.0.2 FO CH Essential items for visit checklist

SVP 4.6.0.3 FO CH Letter to team members

SVP 4.6.0.4 FO CH Template for schedule for school events

SVP 4.6.0.5 FO CH Roster of the team members of the SALT visit to \_\_\_\_

SVP 2.3.0.4 PR CH Report template (dot)

SVP 4.6.0.6 FO CH Information to e-mail to Catalpa before the visit

### **Managing technology**

While the SALT visit is decidedly a human event, the team could not write its report with the degree of legitimacy expected without a competent use of computing technology; specifically, the chair must know how to write in Word on a laptop computer and to use an LCD projector.

The chair must be able to master this technology at this level of competency.

#### **SALT Guidance Documents**

SVP 4.6.2.1 GU CH How to set up computer, use the report template and customize the school report

SVP 4.6.2.2 GU TM Codes for sources of evidence

SVP 4.6.2.3 GU CH Short cut keys for SALT report template

## 7. CLARITY ABOUT DYNAMICS

### School

SALT sets clear expectations for how the host school manages the visit.

How the school handles the team during the visit week is important to the inquiry. The chair has leadership responsibility to do all that he can within limited resources and time to acquaint the school with the purposes and procedures of the visit. Nevertheless, the school is responsible for how well it conducts its part in managing the visit week. For example, the school principal meets on a regular, daily basis with the chair in order to identify and solve any problems that arise.

#### **SALT Protocol Documents**

SVP 4.7.1.1 PR SC Expectations for how the host school manages a SALT school visit

SVP 5.1.0.1 PR SC How a host school can respond to its SALT visit report

SVP 4.7.1.2 PR SC Policy on food and gifts for SALT visit teams

#### **SALT Guidance Documents**

SVP 4.7.1.3 GU SC How the host schools can best manage the SALT school visit

### Team

#### ***The school***

The chair must be clear from the beginning about the importance of the interaction between the team and the school.

#### **SALT Protocol Documents**

SVP 4.7.1.0 PR TM Working with members of the school community

#### ***Managing team room***

While the school should suggest which room the team might use during the visit week, the chair must approve the room.

The concern here is that the team has the appropriate space to carry out its intense work. Issues include privacy and the layout of the room.

### **SALT Guidance Documents**

SVP 4.6.0.7 GU CH The ideal team room

## PROCEDURES TO ASSURE LEGITIMACY

RIDE has adopted strong procedures to assure the legitimacy of the findings of a SALT visit. These procedures are consistent with Practice-based Inquiry®.

### 1. SCHOOL'S RESPONSE AND CHALLENGE OF REPORT

If a Rhode Island school has concerns about how the visit was conducted or whether the findings of its report are accurate, it may challenge the report.

The SALT visit has established clear procedures for how a school may challenge its report.

#### **SALT Protocol Documents**

SVP 5.1.0.1 PR SC How a host school can respond to its SALT visit report

### 2. REPORT EDITING AND PUBLICATION

The procedures the SALT chair uses to assure that the team agrees with the full draft report on Friday are included in *How to use the schedule*.

RIDE has established clear procedures for the editing and producing the report that assures that only the chair can change anything in the report after the team disbands.

RIDE has assured through these procedures that no school, district, RIDE official or staff member can change the wording and content of the report after the team has "locked the report."

#### **SALT Protocol Documents**

SVP 5.7.0.1 PR RD Protocol for Catalpa Ltd. endorsement of SALT school visit reports

#### **SALT Forms**

SVP 5.2.0.1 FO CH Steps for report preparation after the visit

SVP 5.2.0.2 FO CH Versions of report from the perspective of the chair

### **3. CERTIFICATION AND TRAINING OF CHAIRS**

All SALT visits are conducted by chairs who are certified by Catalpa Ltd. When a chair is in training, the visit is closely monitored by certified chairs or the Catalpa coach to assure that the conduct is in accord with the protocol.

The chair leads the team and facilitates its work. RIDE certifies that chairs meet RIDE qualification standards. Catalpa Ltd. certifies that SALT chairs meet standards of expertise, skill and professionalism.

With respect to RIDE certification, SALT chairs are expected to have demonstrated they have acquired practitioner judgment based on practitioner experience (usually five years of teaching experience); they must previously have served as members of two SALT visit teams.

For Catalpa Ltd. certification, they must complete the intensive course on chairing offered by Catalpa Ltd. They must also demonstrate that they have skills at the level to assure the legitimacy of the report as determined by observation of a Catalpa visit coach. A-chair-in-training conducts all visits under the mentorship of a certified and experienced chair.

Ongoing Catalpa Ltd. certification is contingent on a chair's continuous participation in professional development, peer discussions and coaching in the practice of conducting visits.

#### **Practice-based Inquiry<sup>®</sup> Protocol Documents**

PBI 5.4.3.1 PR AG The chair's skills

PBI 5.4.3.2 PR AG Chair certification (in preparation)

### **4. CERTIFICATION THAT TEAM MEMBERS MEET MEMBERSHIP CRITERIA**

The composition of SALT team membership is certified by RIDE.

SALT Teams are composed of active participants from the Rhode Island public school community, with an occasional person from outside that community.

Team members cannot reside in the district of the host school. They must attend a training session prior to the visit.

Team members represent the state's different professional and parent communities that touch public schooling. It is contrary to the principles

of SALT to require special expertise or experience of team members. There is no test of specific knowledge or skill to be a team member.

Teachers dominate the team. Since the primary focus of the team's report is the learning and teaching that actually takes place in Rhode Island schools, teachers must have a dominant voice. They are the professionals who best understand how to judge the real complexities of daily classroom life.

Yet, it is critical that other perspectives challenge the teacher perspective, e.g. local school administrators, parents and other professionals and public groups.

Before the team is seated, RIDE-SALT staff certify that the composition of the membership on each team has met the established standards for team composition. A visit may take place that does not meet these criteria only after discussion with the school. An uncertified team raises the question about the endorsement of the visit report, and such a visit will require additional monitoring by Catalpa Ltd.

While people may make special arrangements to observe the team, they must accept the conditions of a visitor's protocol to ensure that they do not unduly influence the content of the report.

### **SALT Protocol Documents**

SVP 5.4.0.1 PR RD Certification of the composition of SALT visit teams

SVP 5.4.0.2 PR CH Protocol for observers of the SALT visit

### **SALT Guidance Documents**

Recruitment and selection of team members (in preparation)

## 5. CODE OF CONDUCT

Before being seated as a SALT team member, each person must review the *Code of Conduct* and *Conflicts of Interest*. The person must then sign the *Code of Conduct*.

### **SALT Protocol Documents**

SVP 5.5.0.1 PR TM Code of Conduct

SVP 5.5.0.2 PR TM Conflicts of interest for a team member in a host school

## 6. ENDORSEMENT OF CONDUCT OF VISITS AND TEAM REPORTS

The legitimacy of each SALT visit and its resulting report are endorsed by Catalpa Ltd.

The most important assurance of the legitimacy of a team's findings is that the actual conduct of a visit is in reasonable accord with all of the elements of the protocol.

After the chair submits the final version of the report, Catalpa Ltd. prepares a written endorsement of the visit and report, which becomes part of the final report.

Catalpa Ltd. decides whether or not to endorse the visit and the subsequent report as being legitimate. This decision is based on continuous monitoring of the visit and a careful review of both the pre-release report and the final report.

When there is an endorsement issue related to the conduct of the visit, the role of both the school and the team are reviewed.

The chair's responsibilities that tie directly to the endorsement of the visit and report include:

1. staying in close touch with Catalpa during the visit.
2. reading the report.
3. conducting the factual review.
4. preparing the final report.

### **SALT Protocol Documents**

SVP 4.4.3.1 PR CH Reading the report

SVP 5.7.0.1 PR RD Protocol for Catalpa Ltd. endorsement of SALT school visit reports

### **SALT Guidance Documents**

SVP 5.2.0.1 FO CH Steps for report preparation after the visit

### **SALT Forms**

SVP 4.4.3.2 FO SC Letter to principal for factual review

SVP 5.2.0.2 FO CH Versions of report from the perspective of the chair

## **8. ACCREDITATION OF SALT VISIT PROTOCOL**

The SALT visit protocol is accredited by Catalpa Ltd. The statement of accreditation appears in the ***Introduction*** section above.