



# Holliman School

Warwick, Rhode Island

## The SALT Visit Team Report

March 15, 2002



**School Accountability for Learning and Teaching (SALT)**

**The accountability program of the Rhode Island Department of Education**

The findings of this report are those of this SALT visit team. The names and affiliations of the members of the team are in the appendix. The team follows the school visit protocol in the *Handbook for Chairs on Conducting a SALT School Visit*. The team is required to focus on what it observes at the time of the visit and is restricted from comparing the school with any other. This school visit was supported by the Rhode Island Department of Education as one component of its accountability system, School Accountability for Learning and Teaching (SALT).

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This report is available at <http://www.ride.net/schoolimprove/salt/visits.htm>

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# 1. THE PURPOSE AND LIMITS of this report

## Overview

This is the report of the SALT team that visited Holliman School from March 11 through March 15, 2002. The following features are at the heart of the report:

- ◆ The team seeks to capture what makes this school work, or not work, as a public institution of learning. Each school presents a unique picture.
- ◆ The team does not compare this school to any other school.
- ◆ When writing the report, the team deliberately chooses the words that best convey its message to the school, based on careful consideration of what it has learned about the school dynamics.
- ◆ The team makes its judgment explicit.

The major questions the team addresses are:

- ◆ How well do the students learn at this school?
- ◆ How well does this school teach its students?
- ◆ How well does this school support learning and teaching?

The findings of the SALT report are presented in six report sections:

*Profile* describes some of the key features of the school and sums up the school's results on state tests.

The team writes *Portrait* as an overview of what it thinks are the most important themes in the conclusions that follow. While *Portrait* precedes the team's conclusions, it is written after they are complete.

The team's conclusions are about how well the team thinks the school is performing in each of the three SALT focus areas: Learning, Teaching and The School.

The team may award commendations in each focus area for aspects of the school that it considers unusual and commendable. The team must make several recommendations to the school for each focus area, drawing on the conclusions for that area. The team may make recommendations to other agencies, e.g. the district.

The team provides the school with some brief comments about how it thinks the school should proceed, in the *Final Advice* section.

The Catalpa Ltd. endorsement of the legitimacy of the report and its conclusions appears on the final page.

The SALT report creates accountability for improvement by connecting its judgments of quality and its recommendations for improvement directly to the actual work going on in this school at the time of the visit.

The team closely follows the visit protocol in the *Handbook for Chairs of the SALT School Visit*. The Catalpa endorsement certifies that this team followed the visit protocol and that this report meets all criteria required for a legitimate SALT visit report.

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

## Sources of Evidence for This Report

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

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

- ◆ *observing a total of 60 complete and partial classes. The team spent a total of over 70 hours in direct classroom observation. Almost every classroom was visited at least once, and almost every teacher was observed more than once.*
- ◆ *observing the school outside of the classroom*
- ◆ *following 5 students for a full day*
- ◆ *observing the work of teachers and staff for a full day*
- ◆ *meeting at scheduled times with the following groups:*
  - teachers*
  - school improvement team*
  - school and district administrators*
  - students*
  - parents*
- ◆ *talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrators*
- ◆ *reviewing completed and ongoing student work*
- ◆ *interviewing teachers about the work of their students*
- ◆ *analyzing three years of state assessment results as reported in Information Works!*
- ◆ *reviewing the following documents:*
  - district and school policies and practices*
  - records of professional development activities*

*classroom assessments*

*list of after school programs*

*Holliman School Improvement Plan 2001-2002*

*district strategic plan*

*1999, 2000 SALT Survey report*

*classroom textbooks*

*1998, 1999, 2000 2001 Information Works!*

*1998, 1999, 2000 New Standards Reference Examination results*

*1999, 2000, and 2001 Rhode Island Writing Assessment results*

*2001 New Standards English Language Arts Reference Examination School Summary*

*2001 New Standards Mathematics Reference Examination School Summary*

*Holliman School SALT Binder, Sections on Rubric and Standards, Achievement Expectations, Assessment and Instruction*

*Warwick Public Schools Inclusion Guidelines*

*Warwick School Department Primary and Intermediate Report Cards*

*Warwick Public Schools Handbook of Professional Evaluation and Observation, Revised 12/91*

*School Arts, December 2000 edition*

*Rhode Island Graduate Teaching Fellows Program*

*Warwick Public Schools Mentor/Mentee Handbook & Personal Journal*

The full visit team built the conclusions, commendations, and recommendations presented here through intense and thorough discussion. The team met for a total of 20 hours in six separate meetings spanning the four [five] days of the visit. This time is exclusive of the time the team spent in classrooms, with teachers, and in meetings with students, parents, and school and district administrators.

The team must agree that every conclusion in this report:

- ◆ *is important enough to include in the report.*
- ◆ *is supported by the evidence the team has gathered during the visit.*
- ◆ *is set in the present.*
- ◆ *contains the judgment of the team.*

## Using the Report

The team deliberately chose the words, phrases, and sentences it used in its conclusions, as well as in the *Portrait* and *Final Advice*. Thus, this report is the team's best attempt to encourage and support the school's continued improvement in strengthening the learning of its students.

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

It is important to note that this report reflects only the week in the life of the school that was observed and considered by this team. The report does not cover what the school plans to do or what it has done in the past.

This report is not prescriptive. The value of this report will be determined by its effectiveness in improving teaching and learning. By considering how important it considers what the team has said and why, the school will take its first step in becoming accountable in a way that actually improves learning.

It is important to read this report and consider it as a whole. Recommendations and commendations should be considered in relation to the conclusions they follow.

After the school improvement team considers this report, it should make changes in the school improvement plan. The revised plan will form the basis for negotiating a Compact for Learning with the school district. The purpose of the Compact is to ensure that the school and its district work out an agreement about the best way to improve the school and the best way to target district support for the school. A RIDE Field Service Team representative will offer assistance in preparing the compact.

## 2. PROFILE OF Holliman School

### Background

Holliman School, which serves 330 students in pre-kindergarten through grade six, is located in the Pilgrim Park section of Warwick, Rhode Island. Although the original school building was completed in 1954, three additions have increased the classroom space and added an all-purpose room. Holliman is a true community school that is open to a variety of community activities. Several community partnerships have been developed, including one with nearby Pilgrim High School, whose students work in Holliman classrooms as tutors, and one with the Pilgrim Senior Center Mentoring Program. Holliman School serves as a practicum training and student teaching site for several local colleges and universities.

Holliman School is a Feinsein Award Winning School. It is a full inclusion school with special education students integrated into regular education classrooms. In addition to the 19 classrooms that service 330 students, there is an auditorium, a fully automated library, a science room, an art room, a music room, a reading room, an all-purpose room, and a health room. Approximately 17% of the students receive special education services; 19% receive free or reduced-price lunch. Ninety-two percent of the students are white; 5% are Hispanic; 2% are black; and less than 1% are Asian/Pacific Islander.

One principal, a secretary, 15 regular education teachers, five special education teachers, nine teaching assistants, and one reading teacher serve the students full time. Other personnel, who are shared with other schools, include a nurse, a guidance counselor, vocal and instrumental music teachers, a science teacher, a gifted teacher, a physical education teacher, an art teacher, a librarian, a speech pathologist, a physical therapist, an occupational therapist, a social worker, and a psychologist. Support personnel include one head custodian, one night custodian, and six lunch aides.

Currently four Holliman teachers are working towards their National Board Certification. Additionally, Holliman School is a mentoring school to Oakland Beach School for the special education inclusion model. Two faculty members are published special education authors. Several teachers serve as presenters at various workshops throughout the district and the state. Many teachers have been trained and hold certification in several special programs.

Holliman School offers many after school programs for students—both academic and extracurricular. Many social, cultural, and family activities are planned at the school throughout the school year. A very active PTO supports school programs and publishes a newsletter for parents. The school also has a literary magazine, *The Quill*, which highlights student writing, and an enrichment program, ALAP (Advanced Learning Activity Program), for students who meet specific criteria.

### State Assessment Results for Holliman School

On the subtests of the 2000-2001 New Standards Mathematics Reference Examination six in 10 of the fourth graders (62%) met or exceeded the standard in basic skills; four in 10 of the fourth graders (41%) met or exceeded the standard in concepts; and one in 10 of the fourth graders (12%) met or exceeded the standard in problem solving. Equity gaps (a difference of more than 15%) exist in mathematics for special education students. Students at the Holliman School perform at the same level as similar students in the state on the Basic Skills, better than similar students on Concepts, and not as well as similar students on Problem Solving mathematics subtests.

On the reading subtests of the 2000-2001 New Standards English Language Arts Reference Examination six in 10 of the fourth graders (63%) met or exceeded the standard in Reading: Basic Understanding, and one in two of the fourth graders (51%) met or exceeded the standard in Reading: Analysis and Interpretation. Equity gaps (a difference of more than 15%) exist in reading for special education students. Students at the Holliman School perform at the same level as similar students in the state on the Reading: Basic Understanding and or Reading: Analysis and Interpretation subtests.

On the writing subtests of the 2000-2001 New Standards English Language Arts Reference Examination one in two of the fourth graders (51%) met or exceeded the standard in Writing: Conventions, and six in 10 of the fourth graders (63%) met or exceeded the standard in Writing: Effectiveness. On the Rhode Island Writing Assessment four in 10 of the third graders (42%) met or exceeded the standard. Equity gaps (a difference of more than 15%) exist in writing for special education students and males. Students at the Holliman School performed below the level of similar students in the state on Writing: Effectiveness and Writing: Conventions on the 1999-2000 2000 New Standards English Language Arts Reference Examination, but scores increased significantly in 2000-2001.

The most recently available New Standards Reference Examination results have been appended to this report. Information Works! data for Holliman School is available at <<http://www.rido.net>>www.rido.net.

### 3. PORTRAIT OF Holliman School AT THE TIME OF THE VISIT

Holliman School begins each day with students and teachers reciting the school pledge. Their voices state that they are a “team,” a promise they take very seriously. The students, teachers, principal, and support staff at this school have formed a learning community that exemplifies mutual respect, cooperation, and camaraderie. Holliman students are confident that each and every day they will be safe, supported, and encouraged to do their very best. The principal, teachers, and support staff are fully committed to the well being of each and every student. A small but active group of parents provides additional needed support.

The Holliman School community is very proud of the school’s status as a full-inclusion school. All students are accepted as equal partners in the school’s quest to optimize the potential of each and every child. Children in this school are encouraged to be serious about learning. They are given many opportunities to make choices and decisions to direct their own learning. Hard working and innovative teachers not only facilitate student learning, but also avail themselves of many opportunities to enhance their own teaching skills.

This entire school community is committed to instituting standards-based instruction. Standards for all academic subjects are posted in every classroom. Students are fully aware of the connection between those standards and their learning, and they appreciate having clear expectations for their academic performance. A high level of enthusiasm and motivation is present throughout the school.

## 4. FINDINGS ON STUDENT LEARNING

### Sources of Evidence

- ◆ *1999, 2000, 2001 Information Works!*
- ◆ *1998, 1999, 2000, 2001 Rhode Island Writing Assessment results*
- ◆ *1998, 1999, 2000, 2001 New Standards Reference Examination results*
- ◆ *reviewing completed and ongoing student work*
- ◆ *observing classes*
- ◆ *observing the school outside of the classroom*
- ◆ *meeting with the students, school and district administrators, parents, school improvement team*
- ◆ *following students*
- ◆ *talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrators*
- ◆ *2000 SALT Survey Report*
- ◆ *interviewing teachers about the work of their students*
- ◆ *2001 New Standards English Language Arts Reference Examination School Summary*
- ◆ *2001 New Standards Mathematics Reference Examination School Summary*

### Conclusions

Students at Holliman School are highly motivated and enthusiastic learners. Students are eager to participate in class discussions; they actively take part in classroom activities and are engaged in their learning. Holliman students demonstrate a clear understanding of the use and purpose of performance and content standards, and they are able to articulate how these standards relate to their learning. They are also able to use rubrics effectively to evaluate and improve their work. As a result, the students in this school are establishing many of the habits necessary to become lifelong learners. (*observing classes, observing the school outside of the classroom, meeting with students, school administrator, parents, following students, talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrator*)

Students at Holliman are well behaved and respectful of adults and one another. They comply with classroom and school rules and embrace the ideals that they recite each morning in their school pledge. Students demonstrate a sincere respect for authority in their interactions with their teachers. The children truly like their teachers and express appreciation for their efforts. Additionally, the students are kind, considerate, and supportive of one another. Students at this school are genuinely accepting of all students in this diverse learning population. As a result, they contribute to an atmosphere that is conducive to learning. (*observing classes, observing the school*)

*outside of the classroom, meeting with students, school administrator, parents, following students, talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrators, 2000 SALT Survey Report)*

Many students at Holliman School read well. They read a variety of materials, spanning many genres. Students read from basal readers and leveled books. They are able to select books from sizable classroom libraries, as well as from the school library. Students, especially those in the intermediate grades, actively take part in literature circles. These students demonstrate considerable understanding of various texts and make connections to their own experiences. They question and challenge one another to analyze and interpret the text. While most students have excellent vocabulary skills, some primary students are not effectively employing the strategies they need to become good readers, such as “chunking,” using context clues, and decoding. Additionally, many students across grade levels have limited opportunities for sustained silent reading during the school day. Few students demonstrate a true enjoyment of reading. Some see reading as “work” they do in school, not as something they would choose to do for pleasure. These factors might contribute to the recent decline in student performance on statewide assessments over the last three years. *(observing classes, following students, meeting with the school improvement team, students, school and district administrators, talking with students and teachers, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001 New Standards Reference Examination results, 2001 New Standards English Language Arts Reference Examination School Summary, 1999, 2000, 2001 Information Works!)*

Students at Holliman School clearly enjoy writing. They write every day, and most successfully incorporate the steps of the writing process. Students are writing across the curriculum using many formats for a variety of purposes. The quantity and quality of student writing is substantial. Most students connect their own experiences to their writing, which makes it more meaningful to them. Students effectively use rubrics to construct, revise, and assess their writing. Student performance on statewide assessments indicates that many students are proficient in the use of conventions, and most write effectively. On the 2001 New Standards English Language Arts Reference Examination 63% of fourth grade students met or exceeded the standard in Writing: Effectiveness, and 51% met or exceeded the standard in Writing: Conventions. *(interviewing teachers about the work of their students, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001 New Standards Reference Examination results, 2001 New Standards English Language Arts Reference Examination School Summary, 1999, 2000, 2001 Information Works!, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, Rhode Island Writing Assessment Results)*

Many students at Holliman School demonstrate competence in mathematical skills. Fewer students are able to apply mathematical concepts to solve problems effectively or explain their answers using the language of mathematics. This is evidenced by their recent performance on the statewide assessments. Because of this, teachers have made mathematical problem-solving a focus in their classrooms. Many students are practicing computational skills daily, and all students practice mathematical problem solving every day. Students successfully use a wide variety of manipulatives to solve problems; they employ a variety of problem-solving strategies and explain their answers in writing, trying to incorporate the language of mathematics. Consequently, expectations for student achievement have risen, and teachers are hopeful that student performance on statewide assessments will improve. *(following students, observing classes, meeting with the school improvement team, students, school and district administrators, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, interviewing teachers about the work of their students, 1999, 2000, 2001 Information Works!, 2001 New Standards Mathematics Reference Examination School Summary, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001 New Standards Reference Examination results)*

## Commendations for Holliman School

Respectful, highly motivated, and enthusiastic students

Student knowledge and application of standards and rubrics to understand and improve their learning

Genuine acceptance of all students in this diverse learning population

## Recommendations for Holliman School

Recognize and acknowledge exemplary student behavior.

Encourage your students to read for enjoyment.

Increase opportunities for students to engage in independent, silent reading.

Continue your school wide focus on student writing and problem solving in math.

## 5. FINDINGS ON TEACHING

### Sources of Evidence

- ◆ *observing classes*
- ◆ *observing the school outside of the classroom*
- ◆ *following students*
- ◆ *1999, 2000, 2001 Information Works!*
- ◆ *2000 SALT Survey Report*
- ◆ *talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrators*
- ◆ *meeting with the school improvement team, school and district administrators, parents*
- ◆ *interviewing teachers about the work of their students*
- ◆ *reviewing completed and ongoing student work*
- ◆ *Holliman School SALT Binder, Sections on Rubric and Standards, Achievement Expectations, Assessment and Instruction*
- ◆ *reviewing classroom assessments*
- ◆ *reviewing Warwick School Department Primary and Intermediate Report Cards*
- ◆ *Holliman School Improvement Plan 2001-2002*

### Conclusions

Teachers in this school are hardworking, extremely professional, and completely dedicated to Holliman School. They are truly committed to the improvement of student learning and are willing to engage in professional development opportunities to enhance their delivery of instruction. Their participation on school and district curriculum and program committees is commendable, reflecting their willingness to embrace new techniques and programs. Teachers in this school are happy to be here. There is a true collegiality among all members of the staff. The teamwork that is part of the school's daily pledge is evident among the faculty. They freely share ideas and materials. They make the most of their common planning time and are willing to work well beyond the contractual day to coordinate their lessons. Teachers at Holliman School have very high expectations for themselves, their students, and this school. As a result, there are many examples of outstanding teaching practices in this school. (*following students, observing classes, observing the school outside of the classroom, talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrators, meeting with the school improvement team, school and district administrators, parents, 2000 SALT Survey Report*)

Most teachers at Holliman School employ a variety of teaching strategies to motivate their students and optimize their learning. Teachers have embraced standards-based instruction and have set clear expectations for their students. Teachers act as facilitators in many classrooms. They engage their students in active, hands-on, project-based activities and give students many opportunities to make choices and decisions in their learning. Many teachers encourage students to work in pairs and groups, but they also value and promote independent learning. Teachers successfully use visual aids and a variety of manipulatives to support student learning. They make an effort to connect student learning to their students' real life experiences and across disciplines. Some teachers have developed very innovative programs to enrich student learning. As a result, teachers have created an engaging learning environment. *(following students, observing classes, talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrators, interviewing teachers about the work of their students, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, Holliman School SALT Binder, Section on Rubrics and Standards)*

The recent school wide emphasis on the teaching of writing and problem-solving in mathematics is beginning to yield positive results in student learning and in a higher quality of student work. In an effort to improve student achievement in reading the district has adopted a new reading program that is being implemented as teachers are trained in the program. Some teachers have instituted innovative reading programs in their own classrooms. Additionally, teachers in some classrooms are frequently and successfully incorporating literature circles into their reading instruction. Students in these classes demonstrate a deeper understanding of literature and are able to make personal connections to what they read. However, in many classrooms there is limited time for direct reading instruction, independent reading, and silent reading. In these classrooms teachers offer students limited opportunities to self select books at their independent reading levels, and they often teach reading in whole groups. In some cases the time available for guided reading groups is too limited to provide students with opportunities to develop and utilize the strategies they need to become effective readers. Teachers often do not integrate the teaching of reading with the teaching of writing. Therefore, not all students are making the connections between reading and writing that would enhance their abilities in both. *(following students, observing classes, talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrators, meeting with the school improvement team, students, school and district administrators, parents, Holliman School SALT Binder, Section on Achievement Expectations, Holliman School Improvement Plan 2001-2002)*

Teachers at Holliman School provide their students with substantive and evaluative feedback, both verbally and in writing. Students are clearly aware of the expectations that teachers have for their work and appreciate that rubrics are attached to almost every type of assignment. The use of student portfolios is school wide. Some teachers provide opportunities for students and their families to spend an evening reviewing student portfolios. Teachers express that they are not satisfied with the report card being used; they feel it does not reflect the standards-based instruction and assessments they are instituting in their classrooms. While many teachers are using classroom assessment to guide their instruction, they do not differentiate the delivery of their instruction to meet the needs of all students. Some students report that the level of challenge is not rigorous enough for them, while others struggle to achieve established standards. *(Holliman School SALT Binder, Sections on Rubric and Standards, Achievement Expectations, Assessment and Instruction, talking with students and teachers, meeting with students, observing classes, following students, reviewing classroom assessments, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, reviewing Warwick School Department Primary and Intermediate Report Cards, Holliman School Improvement Plan 2001-2002)*

## Commendations for Holliman School

- The professionalism and dedication of the teaching staff
- The collegiality of the faculty and staff
- Teachers' commitment to standards-based education

## Recommendations for Holliman School

- Increase time allocated for direct reading instruction, independent reading, and silent reading.

Integrate instruction and curriculum for reading and writing.

Differentiate instruction to meet the needs of all students.

## Recommendations for Warwick School District

Provide job embedded professional development for teachers in the areas of standards-based education, literacy instruction, problem solving in mathematics, and the differentiation of instruction for all learners.

Review and revise the current report card.

Continue training for all teachers in the implementation of the newly adopted reading program.

Review and revise district time allotments so that time could be increased for direct reading instruction, independent reading, and silent reading in intermediate classrooms.

## 6. FINDINGS ON THE SCHOOL

### Sources of Evidence

- ◆ *observing classes*
- ◆ *observing the school outside of the classroom*
- ◆ *talking with many students, teachers, staff, and school administrators*
- ◆ *following students*
- ◆ *Holliman School Improvement Plan 2001-2002*
- ◆ *meeting with the school improvement team, students, school and district administrators, parents*
- ◆ *Warwick Public Schools Handbook of Professional Evaluation and Observation, Revised 12/91*
- ◆ *Holliman School SALT Binder, Sections on Teacher Evaluation and Observations and Standards and Professional Development*
- ◆ *Warwick Public Schools Mentor/Mentee Handbook & Personal Journal*
- ◆ *Warwick Public Schools Inclusion Guidelines*
- ◆ *2000 SALT Survey Report*
- ◆ *School Arts, December 2000 edition*
- ◆ *Rhode Island Graduate Teaching Fellows Program document*
- ◆ *reviewing list of after school programs*

### Conclusions

All members of this learning community contribute to a school culture that embodies teamwork, camaraderie, respect, responsibility, and acceptance. The principal provides strong direction, support, and guidance to all members of the staff and student body. He encourages teachers to take risks and experiment with different teaching methods that will enhance student learning. He enjoys the support and respect of his staff, the district administrators, parents, students, and other members of this community. His professional goal—that all students reach their maximum potential—is clearly evident in the decisions he makes. Under his leadership all members of the staff have built strong collegial and professional relationships. Similarly, students treat adults and one another with courtesy and respect. Efforts are also being made to develop strong home-school connections. As a result Holliman School is a safe, happy, and welcoming learning environment. (*observing the school outside of the classroom, observing classes, following students, meeting with the school improvement team, students, school and district administrators, parents, talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrators*)

Teachers at Holliman School participate in a wide range of professional development activities. The district and school administrators report that they can be counted on to contribute to curriculum and program committees. Teacher volunteerism in this school is well recognized. Teachers are willing to share their knowledge and expertise with their peers, and they are given opportunities to do so. They have been willing to pilot new programs and evaluate their effectiveness. Currently, the shortage of substitute teachers prevents Holliman teachers from taking full advantage of several professional development opportunities that they feel are important for their continued professional growth. Other supports for teacher professional development are limited, such as the teacher evaluation process and mentoring program. Both teachers and district and school administrators agree that the teacher evaluation instrument is weak and that it needs revision. The mentoring program is strictly voluntary, and no one regards it as a strong tool to support teachers. (*Warwick Public Schools Handbook of Professional Evaluation and Observation, Revised 12/91, Holliman School SALT Binder, Sections on Teacher Evaluation and Observations and Standards and Professional Development, Warwick Public Schools Mentor/Mentee Handbook & Personal Journal, talking with students, teachers, and school administrators, meeting with the school improvement team, school and district administrators, Holliman School Improvement Plan 2001-2002*)

This school community takes great pride in its inclusion program. It is the school's stated goal that special needs children be included in classrooms so that they might be educated with their non-disabled peers. These students are fully accepted by their peers and treated with kindness and consideration. In inclusion classrooms regular education teachers, special education teachers, and teacher assistants are responsible for the delivery of instruction to all students. However, the level of special needs support provided to the students in these classrooms varies, as do the expectations for their achievement. In some classrooms special needs students are included in all possible classroom activities and instruction. In others their participation is somewhat limited. In these classrooms instruction, even for those with moderate disabilities, is separate and different from that of the regular education students, and peer interaction is somewhat limited. Additionally, in some cases a teacher assistant, rather than the regular or special education teacher, provides primary support and instruction for special needs students. While the professionalism and dedication of these assistants is commendable, more frequent direct instruction by, and interaction with, a certified teaching professional is needed. These findings might help to explain the substantial equity gaps that exist for special needs students on statewide assessments. (*observing classes, following students, observing the school outside of the classroom, Warwick Public Schools Inclusion Guidelines, talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrators, meeting with the school improvement team, students, parents, school and district administrators*)

Teachers at Holliman School report that they are provided with the materials and supplies they need to deliver a high quality of education to their students. While the original physical facility was built in the 1950's, it supports a spacious, clean, and orderly atmosphere. Current safety and maintenance issues have been reported and are being addressed. At this time students and teachers whose classrooms are located in the school annex are required to travel back and forth outdoors several times each day, which is extremely problematic in inclement weather. Also, doors that are locked for safety concerns prevent the ease of traveling from one building to another. This not only causes inconvenience but also detracts from valuable instructional time. (*observing classes, following students, meeting with the school improvement team, students, parents, school and district administrators, observing the school outside of the classroom, talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrators, 2000 SALT Survey Report*)

In some classrooms computer technology is often incorporated into daily instruction. Some students have opportunities to do research for projects and publish their writing. Some primary classrooms use computers during their "center" and "circle" times. Given the level of technology available, teachers and students are making the most of these resources. However, the current level of technology is not sufficient to meet the needs of all students, and it does not make the school library a true media center. (*observing the school outside of the classroom, observing classes, following students, meeting with the school improvement team, students, school administrators, and parents*)

Several outstanding programs are offered to students and parents at Holliman School during and after the school day. A wide variety of after school programs are offered at a minimal cost to families; scholarships are available.

The free parenting education program, which the school district offers, is well attended and highly regarded. Art education for students at Holliman School is exceptional. Student work has been published nationally, and some students have received prestigious art awards. Science education is enhanced by a graduate teaching fellows program in conjunction with the University of Rhode Island and instruction by a designated science teacher on a weekly basis. All of these programs contribute to enriched opportunities for student learning. (*School Arts, December 2000 edition, Rhode Island Graduate Teaching Fellows Program document, following students, observing classes, talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrators, meeting with the school improvement team, students, parents, school and district administrators, reviewing list of after school programs*)

## Commendations for Holliman School

Efforts to create and maintain a safe, clean, and positive school climate

The leadership of the building administrator

The spirit of teamwork that is embraced by all members of this school community

Efforts to create a school environment and inclusion classrooms that embrace all learners

Programs in art and science education

## Recommendations for Holliman School

Continue to develop and encourage strong home school connections.

Review and revise your teacher evaluation document and mentoring program to enhance teacher professional development.

Assess the delivery of instruction for all students in the inclusion classrooms. Evaluate and maximize the instructional time provided by certified teaching staff.

## Recommendations for Warwick School Department

Follow through on plans to connect the school annex to the main school building.

Expand the availability and use of computer technology.

Provide resources for Holliman School to implement the needed revisions to its inclusion program.

## 7. Final Advice to the School

As you consider the conclusions, commendations, and recommendations in this SALT visit report, remember to celebrate and take pride in your many considerable successes and accomplishments. The collegiality, mutual support, and camaraderie that have already made Holliman a very good school will make it easy for you to address the challenges of further school improvement.

This school community currently faces the kind of issues that many schools face. Support services for all students, and particularly those for students with special needs, should be reevaluated to ensure that all students have opportunities to meet high standards. Ongoing, job-embedded professional development is needed so that teachers can continue to deliver a high quality of instruction. This aging facility needs minor repairs to maintain a safe and healthy environment. Technology should be incorporated into student learning to prepare your students for their place in 21<sup>st</sup> century society. This visit team has every expectation that these challenges can and will be met by this very strong learning community.

## The Holliman School Improvement Team

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Parent

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Parent

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## The SALT Visit Team

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# New Standards Reference Examination and RI Writing Assessment Results (2001)

## Endorsement of SALT Visit Team Report

**Holliman School**

March 15, 2002

To complete the Catalpa Ltd. report endorsement, I discussed the conduct of the visit with the Visit Chair while it was in process, and I have reviewed this report. Based on my knowledge derived from these sources of evidence, using the criteria specified in the *Endorsing SALT Visit team Reports by Catalpa Ltd.*, and using the methodology and procedures specified in the *Handbook for SALT Visit Chairs, 1<sup>st</sup> edition*, I conclude that:

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

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



Thomas A. Wilson, EdD  
Catalpa Ltd.  
April 1, 2002