



Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education  
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# William E. Tolman Senior High School

PAWTUCKET

## THE SALT VISIT TEAM REPORT

October 21, 2005



School Accountability for Learning and Teaching (SALT)

The school accountability program of the Rhode Island Department of Education

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1.	INTRODUCTION .....	1
	<b>THE PURPOSE AND LIMITS OF THIS REPORT</b> .....	1
	<b>SOURCES OF EVIDENCE</b> .....	2
	<b>USING THE REPORT</b> .....	2
2.	PROFILE OF WILLIAM E. TOLMAN SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL .....	4
3.	PORTRAIT OF WILLIAM E. TOLMAN SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL AT THE TIME OF THE VISIT .....	5
4.	FINDINGS ON STUDENT LEARNING .....	6
	<b>CONCLUSIONS</b> .....	6
	<b>IMPORTANT THEMATIC FINDINGS IN STUDENT LEARNING</b> .....	7
5.	FINDINGS ON TEACHING FOR LEARNING .....	8
	<b>CONCLUSIONS</b> .....	8
	<b>COMMENDATIONS FOR WILLIAM E. TOLMAN SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL</b> .....	10
	<b>RECOMMENDATIONS FOR WILLIAM E. TOLMAN SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL</b> .....	10
	<b>RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PAWTUCKET SCHOOL DEPARTMENT</b> .....	10
6.	FINDINGS ON SCHOOL SUPPORT FOR LEARNING AND TEACHING .....	11
	<b>CONCLUSIONS</b> .....	11
	<b>COMMENDATIONS FOR WILLIAM E. TOLMAN SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL</b> .....	13
	<b>RECOMMENDATIONS FOR WILLIAM E. TOLMAN SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL</b> <b>SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT TEAM</b> .....	13
	<b>RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PAWTUCKET SCHOOL DEPARTMENT</b> .....	13
	<b>RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE CITY OF PAWTUCKET</b> .....	13
7.	FINAL ADVICE TO WILLIAM E. TOLMAN SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL .....	14
	ENDORSEMENT OF SALT VISIT TEAM REPORT .....	15

REPORT APPENDIX .....17

*SOURCES OF EVIDENCE FOR THIS REPORT..... 17*

*STATE ASSESSMENT RESULTS FOR TOLMAN SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL ..... 18*

THE WILLIAM E. TOLMAN SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT  
TEAM.....22

MEMBERS OF THE SALT VISIT TEAM .....23

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR MEMBERS OF VISIT TEAMERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DE

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## The Purpose and Limits of This Report

This is the report of the SALT team that visited William E. Tolman Senior High School from October 17 through 21, 2005.

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

The major questions the team addressed were:

How well do students learn at William E. Tolman Senior High School?

How well does the teaching at William E. Tolman Senior High School affect learning?

How well does William E. Tolman Senior High School support learning and teaching?

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

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

The team sought to capture what makes this school work, or not work, as a public institution of learning. Each school is unique, and the team has tried to capture what makes William E. Tolman Senior High School distinct.

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

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

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

The team made its judgment explicit.

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

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

The team closely followed a rigorous protocol of inquiry that is rooted in Practice-based Inquiry™ (Catalpa Ltd). The detailed *Handbook for Chairs of the SALT School Visit, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition* describes the theoretical constructs behind the SALT visit and stipulates the many details of the visit procedures. The *Handbook* and other relevant documents are available at [www.Catalpa.org](http://www.Catalpa.org). Contact Rick Richards at (401) 222-8401 or [rick.richards@ride.ri.gov](mailto:rick.richards@ride.ri.gov) for further information about the SALT visit protocol.

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

## Sources of Evidence

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

The team spent a total of over 209 hours in direct classroom observation. Most of this time was spent observing complete lessons or classes. Almost every classroom was visited at least once, and almost every teacher was observed more than once. Team members had conversations with various teachers and staff for a total of 68 hours.

The full visit team built the conclusions, commendations and recommendations presented here through intense and thorough discussion. The team met for a total of 33 hours in team meetings spanning the five days of the visit. This time does not include the time the team spent in classrooms, with teachers, and in meetings with students, parents, and school and district administrators.

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

- Important enough to include in the report
- Supported by the evidence the team gathered during the visit
- Set in the present, and
- Contains the judgment of the team

## Using the Report

This report is designed to have value to all audiences concerned with how William E. Tolman Senior High School can improve student learning. However, the most important audience is the school itself.

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

The Pawtucket School Department, RIDE and the public should consider what the report says or implies about how they can best support William E. Tolman Senior High School as it works to strengthen its performance.

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

## 2. PROFILE OF WILLIAM E. TOLMAN SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

William E. Tolman Senior High School, located on the eastern bank of the Blackstone River in Pawtucket, Rhode Island, serves students in grades nine through twelve. The school, originally called Pawtucket High School, opened its doors in 1926 as a “state of the art” educational facility. The building consists of four floors, housing over 60 classrooms, a library, cafeteria, and swimming pool. The facility has been remodeled several times, most recently in 1980.

Currently, an acting principal fills Tolman High School’s principal position until a new, permanent principal is hired. Additionally, two assistant principals and approximately 110 faculty members serve students. These faculty members include three nurses, one psychologist, one speech therapist, five guidance counselors, two social workers, one athletic director, two physical therapists, one occupational therapist, and two librarians. Six clerks, seven custodians, and 17 assistants complete the staff.

Of the 1,379 students in attendance, 844 are white, 331 are Hispanic, 171 are black, 22 are Asian/Pacific Islander, and 11 are Native American. Two hundred seventy-two students receive free lunch, while 81 receive reduced price lunch.

Tolman Senior High School serves as a charter member of the Rhode Island Skills Commission, and works with the schools in this consortium to improve instruction and document results. Faculty members participate in a number of Skills Commission initiatives, including looking at student work and offering all students the opportunity to take a capstone course to achieve a Certificate of Initial Mastery (CIM). Tolman is also a member of the National Academy Foundation and provides two programs of study to their students: The Finance Academy and The Law and Criminal justice Academy.

All ninth and tenth grade students participate in an advisory period two twenty-minute periods per week. A gifted and talented program, “Project Pass,” is in place for students of advanced standing. The school also provides several programs for students who find high school a challenge and need additional support. “Ramp Up” programs in mathematics and English-Language Arts help students acquire the skills they need to gain proficiency in these subjects. Afternoon tutoring programs are offered in English and mathematics. Seniors in danger of not graduating can earn credits, both after school in a school-based after school program, and through the “Diploma Plus” program. An off-campus Alternative Learning Program (ALP) is offered to students. The school also participates in the school based truancy court program.

Further, Tolman Senior High School offers students a comprehensive athletic program that accesses various venues throughout the city. A number of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities occur as well.

### 3. PORTRAIT OF WILLIAM E. TOLMAN SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL AT THE TIME OF THE VISIT

Tolman High School is an urban school sitting on the Blackstone River in the heart of downtown Pawtucket. The Tolman community includes a culturally diverse student body, a dedicated faculty, and a hard-working and caring school support team.

While students are polite and willing to learn, they generally must assume the role of passive learners. Students here read, write and problem solve at a basic level, but they are rarely encouraged to extend their learning to higher levels. These students understand the importance of education, and they express a desire to learn and experience greater challenges in their learning at Tolman.

Teachers are working hard to improve the learning of their students and clearly care about their students' welfare. Although neither connected nor widespread, pockets of excellent instruction do exist here. Traditional lecture style instruction, however, predominates at Tolman and limits students' development of the more critical skills of reading, writing, and problem solving.

The leadership of Tolman Senior High School is in a state of transition, as there is no permanent principal currently in place. The facilities, including the physical structure and technology, are in need of an update. There is a wide range of programs available, which meet the needs of a variety of students. Although there is a representative school improvement team in place at Tolman, the School Improvement Plan is not an effective instrument of change.

Significant work remains to be done to extricate Tolman from its designation as a school "In Need of Improvement/Insufficient Progress."

## 4. FINDINGS ON STUDENT LEARNING

### Conclusions

School-wide, Tolman students attentively and dutifully read when directed to do so by their teachers. When reading, most students focus on basic comprehension of the text. They know how to read passages and answer straightforward questions about the text, but they rarely discuss their reading beyond the literal level. Too few students critically analyze and interpret the text they read. Some students, though, are learning the skills of good readers. These students know how to relate texts to their own experiences, make inferences, and formulate thought provoking questions. Further, they draw conclusions from texts and support their conclusions with textual evidence. Students report that they need and want strategies to read “challenging stuff” independently. While these findings are consistent with 2005 New Standards Reference Examination scores, it is surprising that the difference between basic understanding and analysis and interpretation is not larger than eight percent. *(following students, observing classes, meeting with the school improvement team, and students, talking with students, discussing student work with teachers, 2005 New Standards Reference Examination School Summaries)*

Students write widely and extensively at Tolman High School. They write analytical papers when they respond to quotes relating to books and poems they read, expository laboratory reports, reflective personal response journals, persuasive essays, and explanations for problems in math class. The writing quality varies from student to student and assignment to assignment. Effective writers at Tolman employ logical organization, varied sentence structure, textual evidence to support assertions, and include relevant, on-topic details when they write. Less effective writers here often superficially address the topic at hand, simply summarize a topic, include weak or irrelevant supporting details, and make grammatical errors. Most of these students, however, are learning the skills of good writers. They know how to identify the qualities of good writing. They are learning how to revise and edit their writing to improve its quality. While only 28% of students achieved the standard or achieved the standard with honors on the 2005 New Standards Reference Examination: Writing Effectiveness subtest, 49% of students *nearly* achieved the standard. Teachers say they see continuous improvement in their students’ writing quality, but that it is an ongoing process. Tolman students are building a foundation for themselves to become confident, effective writers. *(following students, observing classes, talking with students, teachers, and school administrators, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, discussing student work with teachers, reviewing classroom assessments, 2005 New Standards Reference Examination School Summaries)*

While some students are currently learning the skills to solve complex, multi-step problems, too many lack the confidence or ability to tackle problems independently or cooperatively and often wait for a model before proceeding. Students show that they know how to suggest a solution and check the validity of their answers when they draw families of graphs in math class. They analyze data and draw conclusions when they investigate crime scenes, create analogies for the parts of a cell, and study case histories of children to determine the sources of behavioral and emotional concerns. Most students, however, struggle to grasp fully the concept of “problem solving.” Instead, they focus on mimicking models and reaching the “right answer.” Overall, students do not practice problem solving regularly or frequently enough to gain the skills to do so independently. These findings align with students’ performance on the 2005 New Standards Reference Examination: only 26% of students achieved the standard or achieved the standard with honors on the problem-solving subtest, while only 8% nearly achieved the standard. *(following students, observing classes, meeting with the school improvement team and students, talking with students, teachers, and school administrators, discussing student work with teachers, reviewing classroom assessments, reviewing school improvement plan, reviewing district strategic plan, 2005 New Standards Reference Examination School Summaries)*

Tolman High School students are polite and eagerly speak with members of the SALT visit team. They spend the vast majority of their school day compliantly and dutifully fulfilling the requirements set forth by their teachers. Students often must assume the roles of passive learners: they copy notes, listen to lectures, and answer straightforward questions posed by their teachers. Students at Tolman say they like classes where they connect their learning to their lives outside of school — they learn to tend to injuries in sports medicine, relate the literary themes such as alienation to their own experiences, and learn parenting and childcare skills. Students, particularly those “in the middle” classes, express a desire for greater challenge in their schoolwork and say they could do more. *(following students, observing classes, meeting with the school improvement team, students, school and district administrators, and parents, talking with students, teachers, and school administrators)*

## Important Thematic Findings in Student Learning

Students:

- ◆ *Want and need greater challenge in their school work*
- ◆ *Understand concepts and skills on a basic level*
- ◆ *Are building good foundations in reading, writing, and problem solving but need further development and practice to “achieve the standard”*

## 5. FINDINGS ON TEACHING FOR LEARNING

### Conclusions

Teachers emphasize reading in all subject areas. They expect their students to read often and emphasize basic comprehension. Most teachers assign reading passages and ask students to answer straightforward questions whose answers can be found directly in the text. Unfortunately, too few teachers expect students to go beyond a literal level with their reading. Most teachers who do address critical and analytical reading rarely expect their students to complete these higher-level tasks independently. These teachers work exceptionally hard to help students, but often their good intentions go awry. Rather than helping their students draw conclusions on their own, they provide students with the analysis and interpretation of what they read. They do the work for the students. Consequently, students struggle to develop strategies to read critically and apply these strategies independently. *(following students, observing classes, discussing student work with teachers, talking with students and teachers, meeting with students and parents, 2005 New Standards Reference Examination School Summaries)*

Tolman teachers require students to write often in all subject areas. Teachers model good writing, provide feedback on drafts, and distribute writing samples for students, and students are learning the skills of good writers as a consequence. Expectations for quality writing, however, vary from teacher to teacher. For example, most teachers use rubrics to assess student writing. Some of these rubrics emphasize textual evidence and thesis development, while others focus on grammar, mechanics, presentation, and organization. Most writing instruction over-emphasizes summaries, structure and organization, and outlining. Teachers say they emphasize these things because their students are low-level writers and they do not want their students to fail. Hence, students remain comfortable with their basic level writing. *(following students, observing classes, 2005 New Standards Reference Examination School Summaries, talking with students and teachers, meeting with students and parents, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, reviewing classroom assessments, discussing student work with teachers, 2004 SALT Survey report, reviewing school improvement plan)*

Many teachers at Tolman lack a clear understanding of what it means for their students to be effective problem solvers. When asked to define problem solving, teachers reply, “*math is problem solving,*” “*we don’t do problem solving, we only do hands on activities,*” or “*brainstorming.*” Additional teachers describe answering questions from a textbook and responding during lecture as problem solving. On the other hand, others say, “*It is a step by step process in which you identify the problem, go through the problem, evaluate solutions, and arrive at the best answer.*” These teachers require students to explain their decision making process when completing tasks, to formulate and test hypotheses independently, and to discover, explore, and evaluate multiple solutions to the same problem. These pockets of excellent instruction require students to apply their problem solving skills to new situations. Many teachers, in all subject areas, lack a clear strategy on how to incorporate frequent, effective problem solving in their classes. Tolman’s school improvement plan recognizes the need for students to, “*successfully use a variety of strategies to solve a problem and justify their solutions both orally and in writing,*” although this is not occurring within most classrooms. (*following students, observing classes, reviewing school improvement plan, Tolman’s Data Analysis, talking with students, teachers, and school administrators, meeting with the school improvement team, students, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, discussing student work with teachers, reviewing classroom assessments, 2005 New Standards Reference Examination School Summaries*)

The instructional practices of Tolman High School place the teacher on center-stage. Most teachers focus on delivery of information: they lecture, have students read and answer questions, and provide notes, orally and written, for students to write down. Some teachers let students work in groups. In some cases, teachers effectively use student collaboration to purposefully complete meaningful tasks. In many cases, though, teachers simply ask groups of students to complete worksheets or answer textbook questions together. Of great concern to the SALT team, some teachers say they hold different expectations for students based on their class level – general, college, Advanced Standing, etc. – because their low level students “*can’t*” or “*won’t*” learn. Students report they often do not understand the purpose of their classroom activities and wish they could discuss more in class. (*following students, observing classes, observing the school outside of the classroom, meeting with the school improvement team, students, school and district administrators, and parents, talking with students, teachers, parents, school and district administrators, 2004 SALT Survey report*)

Importantly, parents, students, and administrators report that Tolman teachers “*love their kids.*” The SALT team agrees. The teachers here truly care about their students’ social, emotional, and educational wellbeing. They meet with students outside of class to discuss family concerns, recognize their students’ accomplishments, consider and are sensitive to students’ work obligations outside of school, and greet their students warmly as they enter classrooms. The students know this, and it provides for a comfortable classroom environment where they feel safe in their learning. (*following students, observing classes, observing the school outside of the classroom, meeting with the school improvement team, students, school and district administrators, and parents, talking with students, teachers, parents, school and district administrators, 2004 SALT Survey report*)

### **Commendations for William E. Tolman Senior High School**

Caring faculty who support students' social, emotional, and educational wellbeing

School-wide emphasis on reading and writing

### **Recommendations for William E. Tolman Senior High School**

Move your students beyond the basic skills in reading, writing, and problem solving. Emphasize students' development of independent critical and analytical skills.

Continue your school-wide emphasis on reading and writing.

Develop consistent expectations for quality writing from teacher to teacher and subject to subject.

Create a school-wide definition and understanding of quality problem solving.

Hold all students to high expectations for learning.

Pursue and attend quality, school-wide professional development for problem solving and effective "group work" practices.

Vary your instructional practices, and create additional student centered learning opportunities.

Continue to "love your kids."

### **Recommendations for Pawtucket School Department**

Provide and require school-wide professional development for problem solving and student centered learning. Support teacher's implementation of problem solving in their classes.

## 6. FINDINGS ON SCHOOL SUPPORT FOR LEARNING AND TEACHING

### Conclusions

Tolman's school facilities hamper teaching and learning. Too many teachers roam from classroom to classroom, preventing effective beginning and ending of class time, as well as the educational display of student work. Technologically, the server cannot support students' use of power point and the few and far between computers are outdated. The school library, located in the basement, contains insufficient media to meet students' needs. The educational labs available are scarce. School administrators and students report that, after seeing other school campuses, the students feel like "second class citizens." Peeling paint, desk graffiti, and scuffed floors create a dreary learning environment. Further, students and teachers report that the building is so cold that it is difficult to concentrate on learning. This is due to a currently broken boiler. *(following students, observing classes, observing the school outside of the classroom, meeting with the school improvement team, students, school and district administrators, and parents)*

Tolman High School suffers from a lack of educationally oriented leadership and shared vision. Different constituencies report different visions: a new building, problem solving in all classes, and increased student opportunities, among others. Efforts are fragmented: the different foci at Tolman impede forward momentum for positive change. Faculty and staff are reeling from the departure of their principal three days into this school year. District administrators report they are searching for an educational leader to fill the position. While there is a current acting principal, he states he may be gone next week or may still be here next month. Assistant principals report they "spend 125% of their day dealing with discipline." Despite these efforts, students and teachers report that discipline is not applied consistently or fairly. Department heads meet with one another and the administrators regularly, but teachers say that not all subject areas are represented at these meetings. Department meeting attendance and frequency varies from department to department, hindering communication and collaboration among teachers. Because of these realities, students are subject to inconsistent expectations and limited improvement of student learning. *(following students, observing classes, observing the school outside of the classroom, meeting with the school improvement team, students, and school and district administrators, talking with students, teachers, and school administrators, reviewing district and school policies and practices, 2004 Information Works!)*

Programs to meet the needs and interests of students at Tolman High School abound. Special education is moving toward a more inclusive program that includes self-contained and severe and profound classrooms. Students are placed according to their individual needs. RAMP-Up classes provide concentrated supports to students who test below proficient on their 8<sup>th</sup> grade New Standards Reference Examination. Students may choose to take Scholastic Aptitude Test preparation courses in English and math. The Finance and Law Academies provide students with courses of study related to their career interests. Tolman students can pursue a Certificate of Initial Mastery through the school's Capstone class. Overall, these programs effectively address the learning needs of the diverse Tolman students. The communication about these programs, though, leaves some students and parents unaware of their availability. The school nursery commendably provides childcare, support, and parenting skills for students with children. This keeps these students in school. School advisories, in grades 9 and 10, are evolving to help students develop closer connections with a teacher. The effectiveness of these advisories, though, varies from advisor to advisor. Although Tolman offers students internships in early childhood education, students, parents, teachers, school administrators, and district administrators express a need for additional vocational course offerings and vocational programs. The SALT team agrees. Team Tolman provides interested students with an important voice in school leadership. Finally, a truancy court helps ensure that the most chronically absent students improve their attendance, although teachers and school administrators report that attendance is still a major concern. These myriad programs help keep Tolman students learning. *(following students, observing the school outside of the classroom, observing classes, meeting with the school improvement team, students, parents, and school and district administrators, talking with students, teachers, and school administrators, reviewing district and school policies and practices, William E. Tolman High School Program of Studies)*

Tolman's School Improvement Team well represents the different constituencies that comprise Tolman High School — it includes teachers, parents, students, and administrators. The limited self-study, a data analysis NSRE scores, fails to address thoroughly the school's current data; instead, it analyzes the best one of the last three years and compares 2005 scores to 1999 scores. It does not address the general decline in scores from 2004 to 2005. The school's classification as "In Need of Improvement/Insufficient Progress," makes this disconcerting. Most teachers report that they know the School Improvement Plan exists, but few are actively implementing the plan in their classrooms. The School Improvement Team reports they are not yet monitoring the plan. Lack of implementation prevents the School Improvement Plan from actually improving the school. *(following students, observing classes, talking with teachers, meeting with the school improvement team, and school administrators, reviewing school improvement plan)*

## **Commendations for William E. Tolman Senior High School**

Plentiful programs to meet specific student needs

Representative school improvement team

## **Recommendations for William E. Tolman Senior High School**

Apply consistent disciplinary consequences.

Clean, maintain, and update your educational facilities.

Develop and implement a clear, cohesive educational vision for your students.

Develop and implement clear lines of communication between and amongst administration, faculty, staff, parents, and students.

Provide additional vocational programs for Tolman students and maintain current programs.

Conduct a thorough, accurate self-study to identify areas of improvement and then address areas of concern.

Familiarize yourselves with the School Improvement Plan and implement it in your classrooms.

## **Recommendations for William E. Tolman Senior High School School Improvement Team**

Conduct a thorough, accurate self-study to identify needed areas of improvement and then address areas of concern.

Monitor the implementation and effectiveness of the School Improvement Plan. Make adjustments as necessary.

## **Recommendations for Pawtucket School Department**

Clean, maintain, and update the school facilities.

Assist Tolman's development and implementation of a clear, cohesive educational vision.

Hire an educational leader to fill Tolman's principal position.

Continue to provide funding to adequately maintain Tolman's current programs.

Help Tolman conduct a thorough self-study to identify needed areas of improvement.

## **Recommendations for the City of Pawtucket**

Help Tolman clean, maintain, and update the school facilities.

Provide sufficient funding for Tolman High School to maintain and improve current programs.

## 7. FINAL ADVICE TO WILLIAM E. TOLMAN SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Owing to your personable and intelligent student body, dedicated faculty, and hardworking administration, Tolman High School can become whatever it desires.

Tolman students aspire to learn more and to be challenged. Instructional practices, problem solving, and greater expectations for all students need to be addressed to meet their aspirations. Recognizing areas of concern to address the areas of concern will only make your school stronger.

Your support and concern for your students is immediately evident to all who enter your classrooms. Please take this report in the spirit in which it is intended — to improve student learning. Good luck to you as your school moves forward in this important endeavor.

## ENDORSEMENT OF SALT VISIT TEAM REPORT

### Tolman Senior High School

October 21, 2005

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

Did the SALT visit team and the host school conduct the visit in a manner that is reasonably consistent with the protocol for the visit?

Do the conclusions of the report meet the tests for conclusions specified in the visit protocol (important, accurate, set in present, shows the team's judgment)?

Does the report meet the tests for a report as specified in the visit protocol (fair, useful, and persuasive of productive action)?

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

While the SALT visit protocol requires that all SALT visits are conducted to an exceptionally high standard of rigor, visits are "real-life" events; it is impossible to control for all unexpected circumstances that might arise. The protocol for the conduct of the visit is spelled out in the *Handbook for SALT Visit Chairs, 1<sup>st</sup> edition*.

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

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

The Catalpa review of this visit and this report was not routine.

The steps Catalpa completed for this review were:

Discussion with the chair about issues related to the visit before it began.

Daily discussion with the visit chair about possible endorsement issues as they arose during the visit.

Observation of four portions of this visit.

Discussion with the acting principal and the assistant principal at both the beginning and the end of the visit regarding any concerns they had about the visit.

Thorough review of the report in both its pre-release and final forms.

The findings from the review are:

1. This team was certified to meet team membership requirements set by RIDE staff. The school's noting that this team did not include a math teacher is correct. This is not a breach of either the visit protocol, or of RIDE standards for team composition.
2. 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.
3. The conclusions are legitimate SALT visit conclusions.
4. The report is a legitimate SALT visit report.

Accordingly, Catalpa Ltd. endorses this report.



**CATALPA LTD.**

Thomas A. Wilson, Ed.D.

Catalpa Ltd.

DATE: November 16, 2005

## REPORT APPENDIX

### Sources of Evidence for This Report

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

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

- ◆ *observing classes directly*
- ◆ *observing the school outside of the classroom*
- ◆ *following 18 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 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
  - school improvement plan for William E. Tolman Senior High School
  - district strategic plan
  - 2004 SALT Survey report
  - classroom textbooks
  - 2005 Information Works!
  - 2005 New Standards Reference Examination School Summaries

School and District Report Cards

Departmental Binders for English, Library/Media Center, Social Studies, Special Education, Mathematics, Science, Foreign Language, Physical Education/Health, Science

Curriculum Binders: Mathematics, English, Social Studies

Common Planning Time Reports

Advisory Binder

SIT Binder of notes

NEASC 2 Year Report Binder

ELA Manu

### State Assessment Results for Tolman Senior High School

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

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

- ◆ *against performance standards,*
- ◆ *across student groups within the school, and*
- ◆ *over time.*

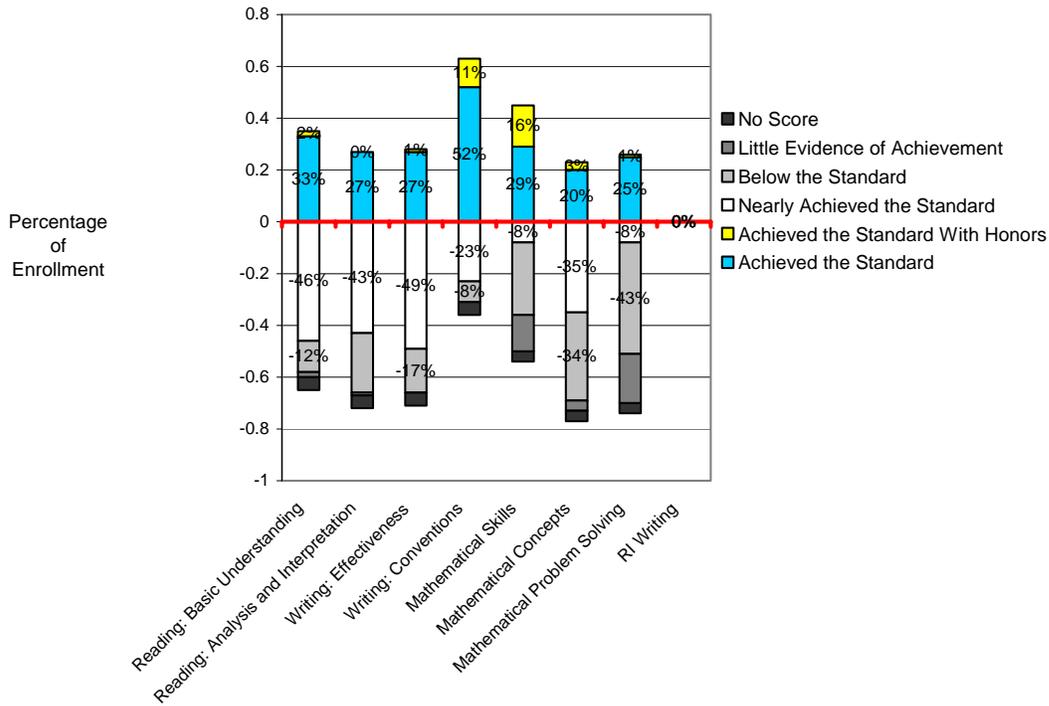
Information Works! data for Tolman Senior High School is available at [/www.infoworks.ride.uri.edu/2005/default.asp](http://www.infoworks.ride.uri.edu/2005/default.asp).

**RESULTS IN RELATION TO PERFORMANCE STANDARDS**

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

**Table 1. 2003-04 Student Results on Rhode Island State Assessments**

William E. Tolman High School State Assessment Results of 2004





**REPORT CARD FOR TOLMAN SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL**

This Report Card shows the performance of Tolman Senior High School compared to the school’s annual measurable objectives (AMO).

Index Proficiency Score, 2002-04	English Language Arts Target score: 62.6				MATHEMATICS Target score: 44.8			
	this School	Target Met?	this District	the State	this School	Target Met?	this District	the State
All Students	74.6	YES	71.1	79.2	57.3	YES	51.9	66
African Americans	72.5	YES	69.8	70.1	51.3	YES	44.3	48.1
Asian	*	YES	*	78.9	*	YES	*	64.3
Hispanic	73.9	YES	68.5	66.9	55.3	YES	48.2	48.3
Native Americans	*	YES	*	73.6	*	YES	*	56
White	76.7	YES	76.3	83.8	61.2	YES	60.5	72.4
Students with Disabilities	48.7	YES†	47.4	61.5	25.3	NO	25.9	43.9
Students with Limited English Proficiency	*	YES	56.5	53.4	*	YES	34.7	41.7
Students who are Economically Disadvantaged	71	YES	68.5	68.5	51.9	YES	47.2	50.1

PERCENT of students tested, 2002-04	Target: 95%			
	this school	target met?	THIS DISTRICT	the state
English Language Arts	94.5	YES	93.6	96.6
Mathematics	94.5	YES	93	96.6

Graduation Rate	Target: 71.4%			
	this school	target met?	THIS DISTRICT	the state
	61	NO	64.8	82.8

TARGETS MET/MISSED, THIS SCHOOL		
	TARGETS MET	TARGETS MISSED
English Language Arts Index Score	9	0
Mathematics Index Score	8	1
Percent Tested	2	0
Graduation Rate	0	1

this school is classified as:

**School in Need of Improvement/  
Insufficient Progress**

KEY: \* Student group has too few students to calculate results.  
 † “Safe Harbor” - Student group has fallen short of the target but has made sufficient improvement over last year’s score.  
 †† Student group has met the target based only on the most recent year of test results. NOTE: For information on targets and classifications, please see Quick Guide .

## THE WILLIAM E. TOLMAN SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT TEAM

Denise Allain  
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Lisa Bessette  
Barbarra Bourgerly  
Alicia Cantone  
Charleen Christy  
Karin Donovan  
Rob Donovan  
Denis Gagne  
Lori-Ann Gagne  
Walter Guest  
Michelle Hanley  
Lyn Kassner  
Maureen Kelly  
Ikristen Keough  
Joan Leiper  
Vanessa Morales  
Paula Najarian  
Angelo Ortiz  
Lauren Plante  
Fred Silva  
Deb Slavin  
Paul Stroup  
Dick Tierney  
Tracey Treanor  
Ken Vaudrain  
Tracy Vaudrain  
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Pat Volante  
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## MEMBERS OF THE SALT VISIT TEAM

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