



# Nathanael Greene School

Pawtucket

## The SALT Visit Team Report

March 7, 2003



**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 of the 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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**For information about SALT, please contact Rick Richards at 401-222-4600, x 2246 or [salt@ridoe.net](mailto:salt@ridoe.net).**

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# 1. THE PURPOSE AND LIMITS of this report

## Overview

This is the report of the SALT team that visited Nathanael Greene School from March 3, through March 7, 2003. 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 Nathanael Greene 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 Nathanael Greene School.

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

◆ *The team spent a total of over 96 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 6 students for a full day*

◆ *observing the work of teachers and staff for a full day*

◆ *meeting at scheduled times with the following groups:*

*teachers*

*school improvement team*

*school and district administrators*

*students*

*parents*

◆ *talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrators*

◆ *reviewing completed and ongoing student work*

◆ *discussing student work with teachers*

◆ *analyzing five 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*

*Theory Into Practice by Connie Prevatte*

*Kid Writing*

*Nathanael Greene Self-Study Summary*

*Nathanael Greene School mission statement*

*school improvement plan for Nathanael Greene School*

*district strategic plan*

*Pawtucket School Department Student Policy Handbook*

*Contract between the School Committee of the City of Pawtucket and the Pawtucket Teachers' Alliance*

*2001-2002 SALT Survey report*

*2002-2003 SALT Survey report*

*classroom textbooks*

*2002 Information Works!*

*2002 New Standards Reference Examination results*

*2002 Rhode Island Writing Assessment results*

*2002 New Standards English Language Arts Reference Examination School Summary*

### 2002 New Standards Mathematics Reference Examination School Summary

The full visit team built the conclusions, commendations, and recommendations presented here through intense and thorough discussion. The team met for a total of 30 hours in six separate meetings spanning the 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 Nathanael Greene School

### Background

Nathanael Greene School is located in the Fairlawn neighborhood of Pawtucket, Rhode Island. The 86-year-old building has had several renovations. The most recent is the addition of a gymnasium and a kitchen.

Five hundred seventy students attend kindergarten through grade six at Nathanael Green. Of these, 66 percent are white, 24 percent are Hispanic, and 9 percent are black. Five percent of the students receive ESL services, and 19 percent receive some type of special education services. Sixty-five percent receive free or reduced-price lunch.

A professional staff of 45 full- and part-time teachers, one full-time social worker, one full-time speech teacher, and one administrator service Nathanael Greene School. Six inclusion rooms, four self-contained classrooms, and two resource rooms serve the special education population.

A literacy team, composed of reading teachers, the literacy teacher, the principal, and ESL and resource teachers, meets quarterly to review the needs of staff and students and to determine how best to meet student needs. Reading teachers work with kindergarten through grade 4, and the literacy teacher works primarily with grades three and four.

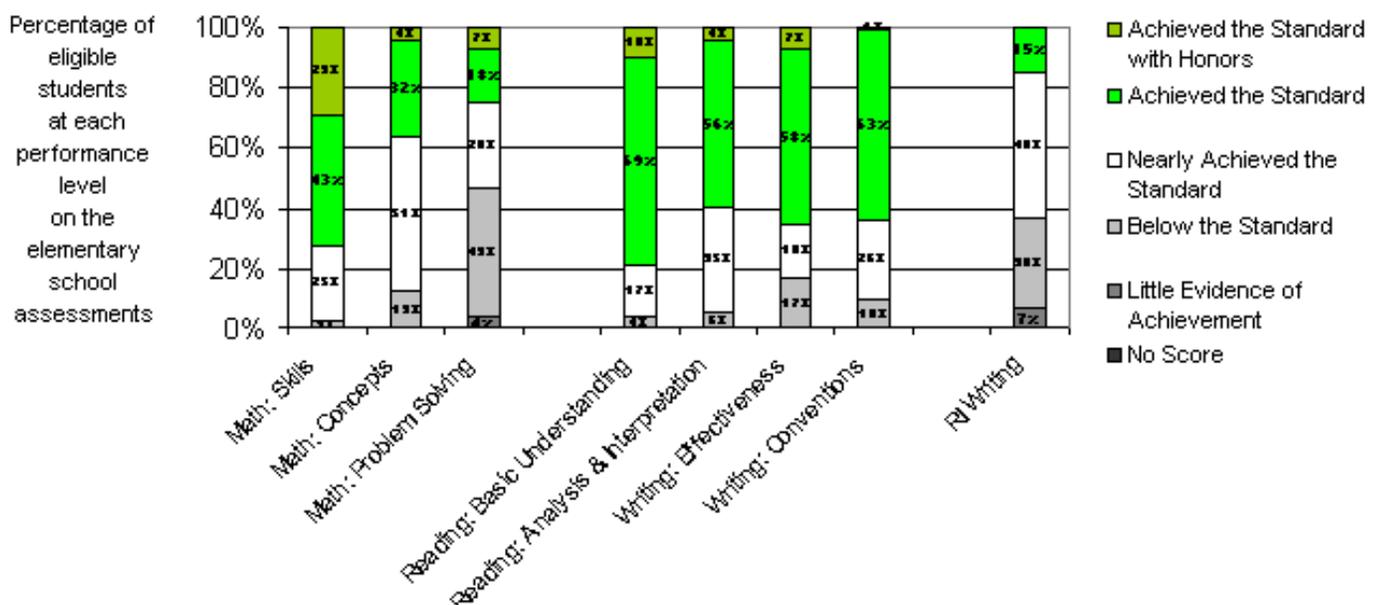
### State Assessment Results for Nathanael Greene School

This section of the school profile shows results from the latest available state assessment program four different ways: against performance standards; compared to similar students in the state; across student groups within the school; and over time. Assessment results create pieces of evidence that the visit team uses as it conducts its inquiry. The team uses this evidence to shape its efforts to locate critical issues for the school. It also uses this evidence, along with other evidence, to draw conclusions about those issues.

#### 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. 2001-02 Student Results on Rhode Island State Assessments**

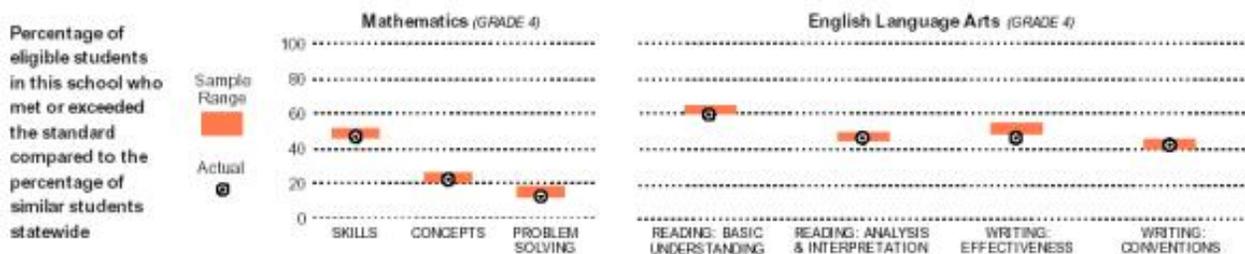


Fourth graders at Nathanael Greene School performed well on all subtests of the 2002 New Standards Reference Exam. The greatest gaps to standard were in mathematics concepts and problem solving. On all other subtests at least 60 percent of students achieved the standard.

**Results compared to similar students in the state**

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

**Table 2. 2000-2001 Student Results in Comparison to Similar Students Statewide**

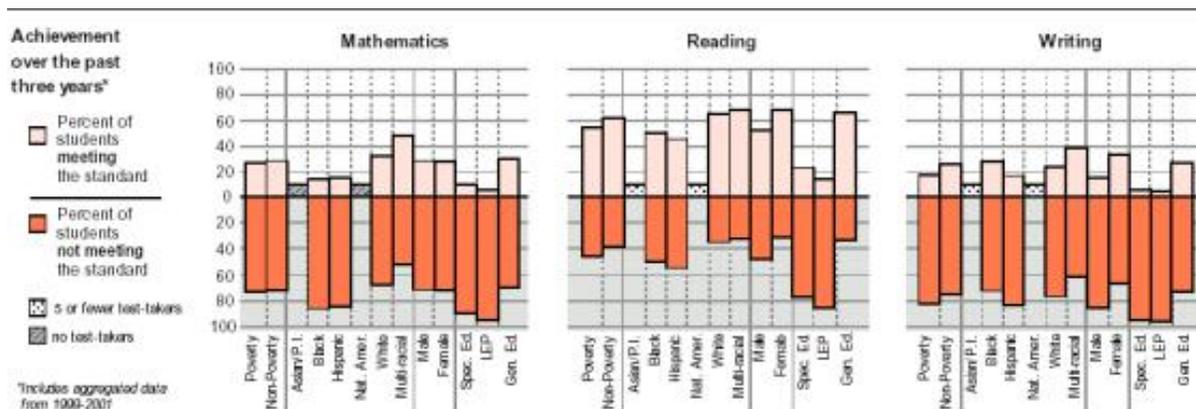


On every subtest of the 2001 New Standards Reference Exams Nathanael Greene fourth grade students performed the same as similar students statewide.

**Results across student groups within the school**

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

**Table 3. 2000-2001 Student Results across Subgroups**



Equity gaps in mathematics and reading exist for black and Hispanic students. Equity gaps in mathematics, reading, and writing exist for students who participate in special education and limited English proficiency programs.

**Results over time**

Now that the state assessment program has been functioning for five years, it is possible to show results over meaningful

periods of time. This display shows changes in the percentage of students at or above standard and the percentage of students in the lowest performance categories. These displays correspond to the targets the Department of Education asked schools to set four years ago and are the basis for the department categorizing schools as improving or non-improving.

**Table 4. 2002 Student Results Showing Change Over Time**

The Nathanael Greene School has been categorized as a moderate performing, improving in math on the basis of its assessment results from 1998 to 2002. The following tables show if the school improved or not in each area that defines improvement (*Yes* denotes improvement and *No* denotes no improvement.)

<b>Mathematics: Skills</b>		<b>Mathematics: Concepts</b>		<b>Mathematics: Problem Solving</b>	
<i>Increase in Percent Proficient</i>	<i>Decrease in Percent in Lowest Performance Levels</i>	<i>Increase in Percent Proficient</i>	<i>Decrease in Percent in Lowest Performance Levels</i>	<i>Increase in Percent Proficient</i>	<i>Decrease in Percent in Lowest Performance Levels</i>
<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>

<b>Reading: Basic Understanding</b>		<b>Reading: Analysis and Interpretation</b>	
<i>Increase in Percent Proficient</i>	<i>Decrease in Percent in Lowest Performance Levels</i>	<i>Increase in Percent Proficient</i>	<i>Decrease in Percent in Lowest Performance Levels</i>
<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>

<b>Writing: Effectiveness</b>		<b>Writing: Conventions</b>		<b>Rhode Island Writing</b>	
<i>Increase in Percent Proficient</i>	<i>Decrease in Percent in Lowest Performance Levels</i>	<i>Increase in Percent Proficient</i>	<i>Decrease in Percent in Lowest Performance Levels</i>	<i>Increase in Percent Proficient</i>	<i>Decrease in Percent in Lowest Performance Levels</i>
<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>

Nathanael Greene School has moved from a low performing to a moderately performing school. Students showed considerable gains in scores on all subtests of the 2002 New Standards Reference Exam.

Information Works! data for Nathanael Greene School is available at <http://www.rido.net>.

### 3. PORTRAIT OF Nathanael Greene School AT THE TIME OF THE VISIT

Within Nathanael Greene School, with its spacious classrooms, huge glistening hallways, and high ceilings, resides a dedicated faculty and staff that genuinely care about the social, emotional, and educational needs of their diverse population of students. The classrooms and hallways of this large, urban school are adorned with student writing, projects, and art work. This is a print-rich environment with literacy at its heart.

Nathanael Greene is a happy place. Both teachers and students seem excited to be here. The quiet voices of children are heard in the hallways, and their laughter is heard in the classrooms. One hears an unhappy teacher or sees a child isolated and alone in very few classrooms.

The principal works hard to support this school community and its students and teachers. Teachers, for the most part, like and support one another as they accept the challenges of changing curricula and school accountability. Most go out of their way to take advantage of opportunities to improve their practice.

Parents are generally happy here. Some express a desire for more opportunities to volunteer their services. Others would like to see the availability of more after school activities. Parents voice concerns for the safety of their children when they arrive and depart from school. The steps that lead to the grand front door, though visually appealing, present a hazard to all who enter the building. They are steep and crumbling, and they lack appropriately placed handrails.

Test scores tell us that learning at Nathanael Greene School is improving. The challenge for the teachers and staff is to be sure that learning is improving for all students.

## 4. FINDINGS ON STUDENT LEARNING

### Sources of Evidence

- ◆ *following students*
- ◆ *observing classes*
- ◆ *observing the school outside of the classroom*
- ◆ *meeting with the school improvement team, students, parents, school and district administrators*
- ◆ *talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrators*
- ◆ *reviewing completed and ongoing student work*
- ◆ *reviewing classroom assessments*
- ◆ *discussing student work with teachers*
- ◆ *2002 New Standards English Language Arts Reference Examination School Summary*
- ◆ *2002 New Standards Mathematics Reference Examination School Summary*

### Conclusions

Students at Nathanael Greene School enjoy reading in school and at home. They are aware of their reading levels and recognize when books are “just right” for them. Children identify genre and select books from labeled bins in their print-rich classrooms. They participate in flexible guided reading groups, literature circles, and independent reading. They discuss their reading during student-teacher conferences. They look forward to daily read alouds by their teachers. They bring books home from their classrooms and the school library to read. Their enthusiasm for reading contributes to their success as readers and on the state assessments. (*following students, observing classes, meeting with the school improvement team, students and parents, talking with students and teachers, discussing student work with teachers, 2002 New Standards English Language Arts Reference Examination School Summary*)

Students report that they like math but find it more difficult than reading. They often work with partners and in groups to solve problems. Students in the lower grades are provided manipulatives. In the upper grades students often choose the appropriate tools. Students learn from each other by talking through problems and sharing their strategies. Most enjoy solving difficult math problems, while others require, but do not receive, more individualized instruction. These struggling students lack the appropriate modification of instruction and assignments to develop a deeper understanding of math at their instructional levels. In some upper grade classrooms students refer to criteria and rubrics to assist them in their written explanations. Students made considerable gains on the 2002 New Standards Mathematics Reference Examination. (*following students, observing classes, meeting with students, talking with students, 2002 New Standards Mathematics Reference Examination School Summary*)

Students at Nathanael Greene School write adequately on a daily basis for a variety of purposes. They write explanations, narrative and expository pieces, poetry, response journals, weekend news, math journals, science journals, and dialogue journals. Students enjoy many opportunities to share their writing in the classroom. They also proudly display their work on the classroom walls and in the hallways. (*following students, observing classes, observing the school outside the classroom, meeting with students, talking with students, discussing student work with teachers, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, reviewing classroom assessments*)

### Commendations for Nathanael Greene School

Students' awareness of appropriate book choices

## Recommendations for Nathanael Greene School

Continue your use of flexible guided reading groups.

Continue to build your collection of books for guided and independent reading.

Model for students how to use a rubric to improve performance.

Differentiate instruction, especially in math, to meet the needs of all students.

## 5. FINDINGS ON TEACHING

### Sources of Evidence

- ◆ *following students*
- ◆ *observing classes*
- ◆ *observing the school outside of the classroom*
- ◆ *meeting with the school improvement team, students, parents, school and district administrators*
- ◆ *talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrators*
- ◆ *reviewing completed and ongoing student work*
- ◆ *discussing student work with teachers*
- ◆ *reviewing classroom assessments*
- ◆ *reviewing school improvement plan*
- ◆ 2002 Information Works!
- ◆ *reviewing records of professional development activities*
- ◆ *district Best Practices document*
- ◆ *Nathanael Greene School mission statement*

### Conclusions

Teachers at Nathanael Greene School are happy to be here, work well together, and like their students. They are professionals who regularly take advantage of professional development opportunities outside the school day. The staff includes teachers, who conduct workshops and classes for teachers in the district

, as well as throughout the state. Many grade level teachers voluntarily meet at least once a week at their common planning time. Teachers establish regular routines. Schedules are followed rigidly in most classrooms. While strict schedules provide predictability and structure, they sometimes do not provide sufficient opportunities for teachers to build momentum, extend a lesson, or seize the teachable moment. (*following students, observing classes, observing the school outside the classroom, meeting with the school improvement team, students, parents, school and district administrators, talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrators, reviewing records of professional development activities*)

Nathanael Greene School's stated mission is to provide ". . . flexible instructional strategies that address individual needs." Although teachers use a variety of teaching strategies effectively, they seldom differentiate instruction to meet the needs of all the children in their classrooms. Some students struggle with assignments that are too difficult or too long. Others complete assignments that are too easy and that do not challenge them. Student learning centers do not provide choices that challenge students at varied levels. Even in inclusion and self-contained classrooms, teachers rarely modify their assignments to meet or challenge the various ability levels of their students. Reading, where most students receive instruction at appropriate levels, is an exception. Literacy and reading teachers, teacher assistants, and student teachers, however, are not always used effectively to assist in providing needed modifications. (*following students, observing classes, talking with students, teachers, staff, and*

*district administrators, discussing student work with teachers, reviewing classroom assessments, Nathanael Greene School mission statement)*

Teachers at Nathanael Greene School successfully teach reading employing strategies from a variety of sources. The positive effects of professional development in literacy are evident in the classrooms. Teachers regularly provide opportunities for independent reading, and they regularly hold reading conferences with their students. At all grade levels they read aloud daily to their students. They conduct flexible guided reading groups at appropriate reading levels with their students. Teachers and administrators have purchased group and class sets of leveled books for guided reading that are housed in a book room and shared throughout the school. Classrooms have adequate libraries of trade books in various genres from which students may choose for their independent, self-selected reading. Teachers assess reading through the regular use of running records, benchmark books, or the STAR (Standardized Test for the Assessment of Reading) computer program. They use results from these assessments to determine the appropriate reading levels for students. Although the balanced literacy program is new for some, teachers have worked together wholeheartedly to implement this program in a way that will improve student learning in all subject areas. *(following students, observing classes, meeting with the school improvement team, students, parents, school and district administrators, talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrators, reviewing completed and ongoing work, reviewing classroom assessments, reviewing school improvement plan, reviewing district and school policies and practices, reviewing records of professional development activities)*

Teachers are deliberately concentrating on improving their teaching of writing in all curricula areas. The Kid Writing program is effectively used in some primary classrooms. During writers' workshop teachers follow the writing process with their students. They ask students to brainstorm topics, use graphic organizers, conference with their peers and with the teacher regularly, write drafts, and produce final copies. They encourage students to write in different genres, for different purposes, and for a variety of audiences. Teachers and students celebrate writing by sharing with each other and by displaying their work in the school hallways and classrooms. This emphasis on writing should improve student writing, learning, and performance. *(following students, observing classes, observing the school outside the classroom, meeting with the school improvement team, students, parents, school and district administrators, talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrators, reviewing completed and ongoing work, discussing student work with teachers, reviewing classroom assessments)*

Nathanael Greene School has been recognized by the state as a school that has improved in mathematics over the past two years. Teachers in kindergarten through grade 5 use some components of the district-mandated *Growing With Mathematics* program, but they express some frustration that the program does not address all of the required standards in math. To fill these gaps, they supplement the program. While some supplement with standards-based activities that support the math program, others supplement with inappropriate drill and practice worksheets that compromise the program. In most classrooms students work together with partners or in small groups to solve problems. They share strategies, talk about their solutions, and explain their solutions in writing. Calculators and math manipulatives are available to students in all classrooms. *(following students, observing classes, talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrators, meeting with district administrators, reviewing completed and ongoing work, discussing student work with teachers, district Best Practices document, 2002 Information Works!)*

Teachers have high expectations for student work, which they clearly communicate to students. Teachers use rubrics mostly to assess writing and mathematics. Some of these rubrics are child friendly and/or task specific. Others are written in adult language and are not useful to children. Some students understand how to use rubrics to improve their work, while others see rubrics simply as grading tools. *(following students, observing classes, talking with students, discussing student work with teachers, reviewing classroom assessments)*

Teachers, for the most part, are not using the computers in their classrooms effectively to advance student learning

. They allow students to use computers primarily for math and word games, reading assessment, and occasional word processing. Only a few encourage students to use the computer for research and investigations. Some teachers report that the reallocation of computers within the school reduced the number of computers in their classrooms, making it difficult to use technology effectively for instruction. Infrequent use of classroom computers limits possibilities for differentiated instruction. *(following students, observing classes, meeting with the school improvement team, students, school and district administrators, talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrators)*

## Commendations for Nathanael Greene School

Literacy resource room with group and classroom sets of leveled books

Labeled bins of books in classroom libraries

Teachers' use of planning time to collaborate within their grade levels

## Recommendations for Nathanael Greene School

Provide time for struggling teachers to visit classrooms where good teaching strategies and effective classroom management are common practice.

Include reading, literacy, ESL, and special education inclusion teachers in planning classroom instruction as often as possible so that their expertise will more effectively enhance student learning.

Supplement district-mandated mathematics programs only with standards-based tasks and lessons.

Make all rubrics child-friendly, and begin to involve students in writing rubrics so that they better understand how to use them to improve their work.

Provide workshops on differentiated instruction.

Provide workshops on standards-based mathematics for parents.

Provide workshops for using computers in instruction and encourage their use.

## Recommendations for the Pawtucket School District

Align standards-based supplemental math materials with district-mandated mathematics programs.

Provide workshops on differentiated instruction.

Communicate better with teachers about district mandates.

Provide additional computers to classrooms that demonstrate an interest in using them.

## 6. FINDINGS ON THE SCHOOL

### Sources of Evidence

- ◆ *following students*
- ◆ *observing classes*
- ◆ *observing the school outside of the classroom*
- ◆ *talking with many students, teachers, staff, and school administrators*
- ◆ *meeting with the school improvement team, students, parents, school and district administrators*
- ◆ *2002-2003 SALT Survey report*
- ◆ *reviewing district and school policies and practices,*
- ◆ *reviewing records of professional development activities,*
- ◆ *school improvement plan*

### Conclusions

The principal, in his second year at Nathanael Greene School, is an educational leader. He attends professional development with his teachers to increase his knowledge of district-mandated curricula and then expects that changes in instruction will occur. He respects where his teachers are professionally, yet gently encourages them to explore new practices. He celebrates the achievements of his staff in general

, but he misses opportunities to praise his staff individually. Faculty, staff, and district administrators find that he is fair and that he is a good manager. He supports teachers and provides the materials they need to teach. By rearranging schedules and classroom locations, he allows time for teachers to meet in grade level teams. He goes beyond the responsibilities of his position to be sure that the school is functioning at the highest level. (*observing the school outside of the classroom, meeting with the school improvement team, students, parents, school and district administrators, talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrators*)

Special education students at Nathanael Greene School receive services in resource, inclusion, and self-contained rooms. Teaching assistants, used in lieu of certified special educators for half of the school day, provide services in the inclusion classrooms. Without a certified special education teacher in the classroom at all times students are getting help, but not instruction. When a certified special education teacher is split between two inclusion classrooms, opportunities for co-teaching are limited. Turnover among teacher assistants effects continuity of service. In addition, students in self-contained classrooms are not assigned to a mainstream homeroom. They are, with few exceptions, isolated from their peers. This limits all students' opportunities to develop an understanding of student differences and to model appropriate behaviors. (*following students, observing classes, observing the school outside of the classroom, meeting with parents and district administrators*)

The emphasis on literacy at Nathanael Greene School does not carry over to the library. The room is tucked away, and it feels dark and dreary. Books are not attractively displayed. Little in this room invites the reader to select and linger over a good book. The library does not serve as a media center for the school, so it does not support or encourage research. (*observing the school outside of the classroom, observing classes*)

Parents are frustrated with their lack of access to the school. They want to be more involved in volunteer activities in the classrooms. Teachers, on the other hand, say that it is difficult to recruit volunteers. Both parents and teachers recognize the need for more after school clubs, sports, and activities. (*meeting with parents, talking with teachers, staff, and school*

*administrators, 2002-2003 SALT Survey report)*

Arrival at and departure from Nathanael Greene School pose challenges and create safety concerns for both children and adults. The front entry, which is the only permitted entrance to the school for students and parents, is far from any available parking and requires walking a long distance on sidewalks. These sidewalks are often filled with puddles or patches of ice. The stairs to the door are imposing, daunting, and deteriorating. A center rail makes it impossible simply to open the door and enter. It is also a safety concern when children are dropped off at the school in the morning at the side parking lot and on Smithfield Avenue. *(following students, observing classes, meeting with the school improvement team, parents, school and district administrators, talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrators)*

## Commendations for Nathanael Greene School

Schedule that allows for grade level planning

## Recommendations for Nathanael Greene School

Explore alternative scheduling in order to provide more mainstreaming opportunities for self-contained students.

Create a library media center that is bright and inviting.

Increase the numbers of books in the library.

Use newsletters to recruit parents actively for appropriate volunteer tasks in the school and provide training for them.

Address safety concerns at arrival and dismissal.

## Recommendations for Pawtucket School District

Provide a certified special education teacher in the inclusion classrooms at all times.

Provide resources to upgrade the library to a library media center.

Resolve traffic, parking, and safety issues at Nathanael Greene School.

## Recommendations for the City of Pawtucket

Cooperate with the Pawtucket School District to develop a plan to resolve traffic, parking, and safety issues at Nathanael Greene School.

## 7. Final Advice to the School

We have enjoyed our week at Nathanael Greene School. Your energy and strong desire for success with your students should continue to move this school forward.

As you develop your school improvement plan, consider ways to better include your special populations in the mainstream life of the school. As you become more comfortable with curriculum mandates, find more ways to reach students who are struggling in your classes and to challenge those who need the push.

It is especially important in such a large school to develop a sense of community. Enlist resources that will keep the door to this building open longer and support the social needs of your children and your community. Pull the parents into planning opportunities for before and after school activities. Make them partners.

Insist that the district work diligently with the City of Pawtucket until a plan for safe arrival and departure of students is developed and implemented. Nothing is more important than the safety of your students.

## The Nathanael Greene School Improvement Team

Rosina Guise

Keith Hemenway

Tracey Kareemo

Julie Lynch

Jodie Olivo

Raymond Pita

Paul Sneesby

Betsy VonSpreckelson

Jeanne Waxgiser

## The SALT Visit Team

Carol Belair, Chair  
Wilbur and McMahon School  
Little Compton, Rhode Island  
On leave to the Rhode Island Department of Education  
To serves as a Regents SALT Fellow

Michelle Fournier  
Guidance Counselor  
Cumberland Hill Elementary  
Cumberland, Rhode Island

Donna Gattinella  
District Math Coach, Grades 2-3  
Veterans Memorial Elementary School  
Central Falls, Rhode Island

Jennifer Labrecque  
Reading Teacher, Grades 1-2  
Hamilton School  
North Kingstown, Rhode Island

Margarida Saunders  
Grade 2 Teacher  
Oldham School  
East Providence, Rhode Island

Don Waterous  
Grade 5 Teacher  
Peace Dale Elementary School  
South Kingstown, Rhode Island

## Endorsement of SALT Visit Team Report

### **Nathanael Greene School**

March 7, 2002

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 routine.

The steps Catalpa completed for this review were:

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

The findings from the review are:

1. This team was certified to meet team membership requirements by RIDE staff.
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.



Thomas A. Wilson, EdD  
Catalpa Ltd.  
DATE: March 26, 2003