

**The Report of the  
Accreditation Visiting Team**

**Cedar Ridge Academy  
4270 West 5625 North  
Route 1, P.O. Box 1477  
Roosevelt, Utah 84066**

**April 30, 2012**



**Utah State Office of Education  
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**Cedar Ridge Academy**  
**4720 West 5625 North,**  
**Route 1, P.O. Box 1477**  
**Roosevelt, Utah 84066**

**April 30, 2012**

**UTAH STATE OFFICE OF EDUCATION**

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## FOREWORD

The purpose of the accreditation process is to stimulate school growth and improvement so as to increase the quality of instruction and student achievement. In these efforts, the school staff makes a comprehensive evaluation of the school's programs, operations, and results. The school determines how actual practices align to stated objectives and resulting outcomes in a three-step evaluation: (1) self-evaluation, (2) on-site evaluation by an external team of educators, and (3) implementation using units of the evaluation to improve the school by effecting thoughtful change.

The evaluation, April 30, 2012, was conducted because of the school's desire to ensure quality education for all students in the school, and to increase student achievement.

The entire staff of Cedar Ridge Academy is commended for the time and effort devoted to studying and evaluating the various facets of the total program and to preparing the materials used by the Visiting Team. The excellent leadership given by Christine Haggerty, Dean of Academics, is also commended.

The staff and administration are congratulated for their desire for excellence at Cedar Ridge Academy and for their professional attitude which made it possible for them to see weaknesses and strengths and to suggest procedures for improvements.

While these recommendations may be used to solicit financial support to acquire some of the materials, equipment, and services needed to carry out a more effective program, it is most important that the faculty and administration utilize them as they continue to evaluate and modify course offerings and administrative and classroom procedures to more dramatically increase student achievement at Cedar Ridge Academy.

Larry K. Shumway, Ed.D.  
State Superintendent  
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\*Board of Regents Appointments

\*\*\* CMAC Representative Appointment

\*\*\*\*\*Charter School Representative Appointment

\*\*UCAT Representative

\*\*\*\*USBA Advisory Representative Appointment



## **CEDAR RIDGE ACADEMY**

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

**Our mission is to provide a holistic educational environment in a private high school setting where students can accelerate their learning, achieve academic success, and actualize their inner potential.**

### **BELIEF STATEMENTS**

We believe that:

- All students grow from being held accountable for their choices, both academically and behaviorally.
- All students can develop appropriate attitudes and relationships to be productive citizens.
- All students have strengths on which to build success.
- Personal success is achieved by nurturing the body, mind and spirit.

### **DESIRED RESULTS FOR STUDENT LEARNING (DRSLs)**

1. Writing

Date of visit: April 30, 2012

## **MEMBERS OF THE VISITING TEAM**

Robert Stillwell, Northwest Accreditation Commission and USOE accreditation  
Consultant, Visiting Team Chair

Scott Dowling, Uinta High School, Uintah School District

Shane Lance, Ashley Valley High School, Uintah School District

## VISITING TEAM REPORT

### CEDAR RIDGE ACADEMY

#### CHAPTER 1: SCHOOL PROFILE

Cedar Ridge Academy was founded in 1996 as a coed residential treatment center, licensed by the State of Utah, for students ages 13-18. In 2001 the school completed its first self-study for what has become the Northwest Accreditation Commission. In 2006 Cedar Ridge Academy shifted to a therapeutic boarding school. As a result, the students are more clinically and academically complex. The school's current enrollment is 44 students.

a) *What significant findings were revealed by the school's analysis of its profile?*

The school can make a strong case for having institutionalized its Writing DRSL. In revisiting the mission, beliefs and DRSLs, it was determined that Cedar Ridge would focus on one DRSL and implement it school-wide for each student.

b) *What modifications to the school profile should the school consider for the future?*

An agreement still needs to be reached by teachers as to how a school-wide assessment can be implemented for Writing.

c) *To what extent does the school's self-study accurately reflect the school's current strengths and limitations?*

The 2012 self-study provides much of the history of the school to show the changes that have been made. An area of strength is the integration of the school with other aspects of the total program. An area for growth would be adding professional development time for teachers to collaborate on curriculum development and assessment strategies.

#### **Suggested Areas for Further Inquiry:**

See the recommendations section below.

## CHAPTER 2: NORTHWEST ACCREDITATION COMMISSION (NORTHWEST) TEACHING AND LEARNING STANDARDS

### **Mission, Beliefs and Desired Results for Student Learning (DRSLs):**

- a) *To what degree were the school's mission statement, beliefs, and DRSLs developed and/or revised collaboratively by the school community to define a compelling purpose and vision for the school and to support student achievement?*

The shift from a residential treatment center to a therapeutic boarding school was made to reduce the focus on behavioral interventions and increase academics and therapy. The school's program is integrated, and the educational component supports and is supported by the therapy component.

- b) *To what extent do the school's mission and beliefs align to support the school's DRSLs?*

The Writing DRSL is a response to input from parents and teachers that the ability to communicate through writing is a critical skill for success in school and in life.

- c) *Describe the indicators (measures) that have been developed to assess the school's progress in assessing the DRSLs.*

The school has developed a Writing Survey that measures the perceptions of students, teachers, and parents regarding student competence and confidence in writing.

- d) *To what extent do the school's mission, beliefs, and DRSLs guide the procedures, policies and decisions of the school, and appear evident in the culture of the school?*

The culture of the school revolves around relationship building. The small class sizes help personalize students' education, and the teachers are all trained in the same behavior management system, so there is order and consistency.

### **Curriculum:**

- a) *To what extent does the staff work collaboratively to ensure the curriculum is based on clearly defined standards, the Utah Core Curriculum, reflecting the Utah Life Skills: A Guide to Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions for Success?*

The teachers align their courses with the Core Curriculum, and there are examples of Life Skills throughout the program.

- b) *To what extent does the curriculum engage all students in inquiry, problem-solving, and higher-order thinking skills?*

Because students are in therapy, a certain amount of reflection and introspection is explicitly taught to all students.

- c) *To what extent does the teaching staff work collaboratively to support the development of a curriculum that focuses on the school's DRSLs?*

The faculty exhibits positive collegiality, and teamwork is strong. The Visiting Team has recommended that Cedar Ridge Academy schedule professional development time for teachers to collaborate on assessments and curriculum development.

- d) *How does the staff use assessments to drive curriculum to ensure that all students can reach the intended learning outcomes?*

The individual faculty members use their own formative classroom assessments. They are ready to determine how school-wide assessments will work in the school.

**Instruction:**

- a) *To what extent do teachers use a variety of instructional strategies to enhance student learning?*

The teachers employ a wide range of strategies to meet the diverse needs of their students.

- b) *To what extent have the school and the staff developed strategies for instruction that build the capacity for explicitly teaching the identified DRSL in every classroom?*

Agreements must be made regarding the implementation of the Writing Survey in each classroom. Students are writing across the curriculum and are graded differently by different teachers.

- c) *To what extent is the school's professional development program guided by identified instructional needs, and how does it provide opportunities for teachers to develop and improve their instructional strategies that support student learning?*

There is room for improvement in providing teachers with professional development time to agree on common assessments.

- d) *To what extent are teachers proficient in their content area, knowledgeable about current research on effective instructional approaches, and reflective on their own practices?*

The teachers are highly skilled in their content areas. They are very accommodating of the needs of the students.

- e) *To what extent does the school effectively implement a well-defined plan for the integration of technology into its curriculum, instruction, and assessments?*

There is room for improvement in the acquisition of technology and the training of teachers in its effective classroom use.

**Assessment:**

- a) *To what extent has the staff developed classroom or school-wide assessments with performance standards based on clearly articulated expectations for student achievement?*

Teachers are skilled at formative classroom assessments. Expectations for student performance are high.

- b) *To what extent does the school have a process to fairly and equitably assess school-wide and individual progress in achieving academic expectations?*

Teachers are careful and fair in their classroom assessments of students. School-wide assessment is based on the Writing Survey, which all students use in their English classes.

- c) *To what extent does the professional staff use data to assess the success of the school in achieving its academic expectations?*

Very little data was presented in the 2012 self-study. The teachers do collect data in their classrooms.

- d) *To what extent does the school's professional development program allow for opportunities for teachers to collaborate in developing a broad range of student assessment strategies?*

Collaboration on assessment strategies is an area that needs attention. This requires time for teachers to meet. The school needs to work creatively with time management in order to allocate time for teachers to work together.

- e) *To what extent is there organizational agreement on the use of a school-wide scoring tool to assess the identified DRSL?*

At the time of the visit there was no agreement as to how the Writing Survey should be used school-wide. There appears to be willingness among the staff to move in this direction, but staff members need to be given time to work out the details of implanting an assessment school-wide.

## CHAPTER 3: NORTHWEST SUPPORT STANDARDS

### **Leadership and Organization:**

- a) *To what extent does the school leadership promote quality instruction by fostering an academic learning climate that actively supports teaching and learning?*

The school's climate is supportive of learning and improving. The teachers offer quality instruction and maintain positive relationships of mutual respect with students.

- b) *To what extent does the school leadership employ effective decision making that is data-driven, research-based, and collaborative to monitor progress in student achievement and instructional effectiveness?*

The teachers are responsible for monitoring and reporting student progress on academics. Teachers use individual student data to modify lessons.

- c) *To what extent does the school leadership provide skillful stewardship by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and allocation and use of resources at the school for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment which aligns with the school goals, DRSLs, and school improvement?*

The school is well designed and maintained. The environment provides physical as well as emotional safety. The school leadership needs to work with the management to allocate funds for technology and teacher professional development time.

- d) *To what extent does the school leadership empower the entire school community and encourage commitment, participation, collaboration, and shared responsibility for student learning through meaningful roles in the decision-making process?*

The school leadership includes input from parents in focus groups. Teachers have meaningful roles and need to be given the time to reach agreements regarding curriculum development and common assessments.

- e) *To what extent has the school established a formal system through which each student has an adult staff member who knows the student well and assists the student in achieving the school-wide expectations for student learning?*

Students at Cedar Ridge receive 18 hours per week of group and individual therapy, in addition to working with their teachers in small classes. All Cedar Ridge students are well known by multiple members of the staff who care deeply about their development and healing.

### **School Services:**

This standard is dealt with in the school's NWAC Annual Report, which requires specific responses and information regarding student support services, guidance services, health services, library information services, special education services, and family and community services.

### **Facilities and Finances:**

This standard is addressed in the school's annual report to Northwest, which requires specific responses regarding the physical plant, finances, audit of school records, advertising, etc.

## **CHAPTER 4: NORTHWEST SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT STANDARD**

### **Culture of Continual Improvement:**

- a) *To what extent has the school developed and implemented a comprehensive school improvement plan using Collaborating for Student Achievement, the Utah accreditation/school improvement process, that is reviewed and revised on an ongoing basis?*

The school's 2012 self-study followed the *Collaboration for Student Achievement* format. Cedar Ridge has reworked its mission and beliefs and focused on one measureable DRSL.

- b) *To what extent does the school build skills and the capacity for improvement through an aligned and ongoing professional development plan focused on the school's goals for improvement?*

The majority of the responsibility for the school improvement plan was taken on by the academic director. Time needs to be allocated for ongoing professional development to build capacity in the faculty to implement school-wide assessments.

- c) *To what extent is the new/revised school-wide action plan adequate in addressing the critical areas for follow-up and is there sufficient commitment to the action plan, school-wide and system-wide?*

The current action plans include improving technology, assessments, and curriculum development. The key element in this will be time allocated for teachers to work together while students are supervised by other staff members.

- d) *To what extent does the school create conditions that support productive change and continuous improvement?*

The school has undergone positive changes over the past six years, and with its skilled and dedicated staff it is poised to continue to make necessary changes for the near future.

- e) *What significant progress has been made in implementing the original action plan since the last full visit?*

The school has focused on one DRSL, and it may be considered institutionalized.

- f) *What significant progress has the school made in addressing the major recommendations of the previous Visiting Team and/or review team?*

There were six recommendations. Follow-up studies have not been done. Surveys have not been consistently returned, but they do have testimonial letters and e-mails. Parental involvement has been increased in school improvement planning, and teamwork system-wide has improved. ACT prep is offered twice each year. The guidance counselor is using Choices to help bring vocational and employment awareness to all students. Direct instruction is not the main mode of delivering instruction, but mini-lessons are presented for teacher presentations to groups of students.

## **CHAPTER 5: COMMUNITY BUILDING**

- a) *To what extent does the school foster community building and working relationships within the school?*

Students at Cedar Ridge are held to high standards. They are expected to be respectful when dealing with teachers and other students. There are rewards and consequences for different types of behavior and, while talking to students, the Visiting Team noticed how aware the students were of their own behavior issues and what could be done to correct them. These students have all worked against their communities at some time, and are all learning how to avoid these behaviors in the future.

- b) *To what extent does the school extend the school community through collaborative networks that support student learning?*

Collaboration among therapists, teachers, administrators and parents is built into the culture of the school. Everyone is working to ensure that the students realize their potential, and the students have support coming from many directions.

- c) *To what extent has the school engaged the school community in a collaborative self-study process on behalf of students?*

The school community worked together to develop the self-study, but it was clear that the majority of the study was the work of an administrator at the school.

- d) *How are results of school improvement identified, documented, used, and communicated to all stakeholders?*

The school will share the results of school improvement with the whole multi-team staff in house. The admissions director will share the results with parents and prospective parents.

## **CHAPTER 6: MAJOR COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE VISITING TEAM**

### **Commendations:**

- The Visiting Team commends Cedar Ridge Academy for its culture of mutual respect between students and staff.
- The Visiting Team commends Cedar Ridge Academy for the high levels of integration and teamwork evident among and between staff members from the therapeutic, residential, and educational components of the program.
- The Visiting Team commends Cedar Ridge Academy for the educational leadership of Christine Haggerty.
- The Visiting Team commends Cedar Ridge Academy for its progress in implementing the Writing DRSL.

### **Recommendations:**

- The Visiting Team recommends that the Cedar Ridge Academy faculty reach an agreement on how the writing rubrics will be used as school-wide assessments.
- The Visiting Team recommends that Cedar Ridge Academy develop an additional DRSL. There are good choices to be made by the school staff that will be appropriate for all teachers and all students.

- The Visiting Team recommends that Cedar Ridge Academy develop a technology acquisition plan and provide teachers with professional development for effective use of technology in the classrooms.
- The Visiting Team recommends that Cedar Ridge Academy provide professional development time for teachers to collaborate on curriculum development and assessment strategies.