The Report of the
Accreditation Visiting Team

Farmington Junior High School

150 South 200 West
Farmington, Utah 84025

March 22-23, 2012

Utah State Office of Education
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Farmington Junior High School

150 South 200 West
Farmington, Utah 84-25

March 22-23, 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, March 22-23, 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 Farmington Junior High School 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 Principal Brent Stephens is also commended.

The staff and administration are congratulated for their desire for excellence at Farmington Junior High School 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 Farmington Junior High School.

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*** CMAC Representative Appointment
****USBA Advisory Representative Appointment
*****Charter School Representative Appointment

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FARMINGTON JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF

School Administration

Brent Stephens ..... Principal
Dick Close ..... Assistant Principal
Chadli Bodily ..... Assistant Principal
Scott Francis ..... Administrative Intern

Counseling

Vern Holzer ..... Counselor
Christine Bateman ..... Counselor
Annette Ainscough ..... Counselor

Support Staff

Judy Robinson ..... Head Financial Secretary
Rose Uffens ..... Attendance Secretary
Julie White ..... ISS/504 Secretary
Lani Porter ..... Student Tracker/Secretary
Shari Cloward ..... Counseling Secretary
Andrea Holbrook ..... Counseling Secretary
Ed Erickson ..... Head Custodian
Justin Jenkins ..... Night Lead Custodian
Judy Erickson ..... Head Cook
Kathy Applonie ..... Special Education Teacher Assistant
Kory Campana ..... Special Education Teacher Assistant
Ross Fishburn ..... Special Education Teacher Assistant
Melba Rast ..... Special Education Teacher Assistant
Kinsey Spotz ..... Special Education Teacher Assistant
Ben Belnap ..... Psychologist
Dan Stewart ..... Speech

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Sherry Pate
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Kim Reimann
Douglas Sill
Sarah Silva
Scott Steele
Lance Taylor
Kristy Thornton
Christine Wolf
Heath Wolf
Mark Woodfield

FARMINGTON JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

MISSION STATEMENT

Huskies P.U.L.L. together for student learning.

BELIEF STATEMENTS

P—Positive and safe environment

U—Unique learning styles and instructional strategies

L—Learners perform when challenged

L—Life-long learners prepare for careers and responsible citizenship

DESIRED RESULTS FOR STUDENT LEARNING (DRSLs)

1. Effective Writers
2. Good Citizens
3. Life-long Learners

Date of visit: March 22-23, 2012

MEMBERS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Lori Gardner, Park City School District, Visiting Team Chairperson

Annette Harmon, Rocky Mountain Junior High School, Weber School District

Ashley Higgs, South Jordan Middle School, Jordan School District

Jill Jenkins, South Jordan Middle School, Jordan School District

Brandon Larsen, Sand Ridge Junior High School, Weber School District

VISITING TEAM REPORT

FARMINGTON JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

CHAPTER 1: SCHOOL PROFILE

Farmington Junior High School, which opened in 1982, is located in Farmington, a suburban city of 17,000 residents. The school has 837 students in grades seven through nine. It serves a community that is relatively young and stable, with married couples heading 81 percent of the homes.

The student population is 92 percent Caucasian. Thirteen percent of students are on free or reduced-price lunch. One percent of students are English language learners, and about 12 percent of students receive special education services.

Farmington Junior High is noted for its high academic standards, with proficiency levels in language arts, mathematics, and science at or above 90 percent, significantly above district and state rates. It is also known for its outstanding performing and fine arts programs.

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

The school profile revealed that the school has become more diverse, albeit slightly, since its last review. Data confirms that overall, students are successful, have good attendance, and are good citizens. Survey data suggests that parents, students, and teachers are generally satisfied with the school. The achievement gap, as measured between Caucasian students and those reported as part of subgroups on CRTs, has narrowed for many of the subgroups over the last two years.

The school’s analysis of the data was minimal. Recognition was given as to the difficulty of reporting information on students in some subgroups when the numbers in such groups are so small. The school presented achievement data in the aggregate but did not disaggregate by course. Survey data of students, parents, and teachers was presented in a way that was understandable and transparent, but there was no analysis of the findings.

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

The Visiting Team recommends that the data compiled in the school profile be expanded to fully inform stakeholders of the academic progress of students. This would include disaggregated information based on grades and courses. The school should consider including additional data that would be informative regarding student achievement; this could include grade point averages, formative assessment results, and MyAccess reports.

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

Farmington Junior High School's self-study accurately portrays the basics about student achievement. The departmental and focus group analysis provide adequate information to cover the questions asked, but in many cases they do not delve into the extent of the programs and practices revealed during the course of the visit. No description is provided of who served on the focus groups or what their process consisted of. Many of the school's strengths were not illuminated in the self-study.

The primary focus of the self-study is student achievement as measured by one exam. While CRT data is the easiest to obtain, it does not necessarily provide sufficient information regarding multi-faceted aspects of student performance. Using information such as UPASS data may provide a better understanding of the value-added impact of students' education at the school.

Suggested Areas for Further Inquiry:

- The Visiting Team recommends that the school organize a data committee to determine the data needed to inform the faculty and leadership of who is learning and who is not. This work will be especially important as the school develops the tools to assess the desired results of student learning.

- The Visiting Team recommends that, as departments develop common formative assessments, the data derived become part of the departmental self-assessment.

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?

In 2010, the school leadership team began the process of preparing for an accreditation visit with the intent to use the work to drive school improvement. Their work began with a survey of stakeholders and then a refinement of the mission statement to make it catchy and more meaningful. The belief statements were revised to better work with the motto "Huskies P.U.L.L. together for student learning." Beautiful posters and banners uniting the mission statement, beliefs, and DRSLs can be found throughout the building.

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

The school's mission and beliefs align not only with the school's DRSLs but with the Davis School District's motto as well. The Visiting Team commends the leadership team for the spearheading the process to revise the unwieldy mission, beliefs, and DRSL statements written for the 2004 accreditation visit. The process took the school from statements that could barely be remembered, much less assessed, to ones that are memorable, teachable, and eventually assessable.

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

Due to extenuating circumstances, little of the action plan as defined in 2004 was accomplished. The faculty did engage in professional development focused on reading strategies, which led to the incorporation of a school-wide reading program for a time.

In the fall of 2011, the principal introduced the concept of professional learning communities (PLCs), which was endorsed by the leadership team. A member of each department attended a PLC conference. As of this report, the school's departments are in the early stages of developing common formative assessments. The Visiting Team commends this initial effort; however, it is imperative that the school work to hone school-wide efforts to teach and assess the DRSLs using common standards and rubrics.

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?*

It appears that the mission, beliefs, and DRSLs are beginning to anchor planning, professional development, and dialogue. This winter saw the training of all teachers in the MyAccess writing program and the decision to implement at least one writing assignment for the second semester.

Teachers reported to the Visiting Team that the new mission, beliefs, and DRSLs clearly reflect a united effort, and that they take pride in the effort and product. Parents reported that the banners and posters set a positive tone for the school. While the administration reported that students had been taught the DRSLs in an assembly, there has not been a clearly organized attempt to explicitly teach the DRSLs to the students, and the Visiting Team found very few students who knew what they were.

The Visiting Team strongly recommends that the school improvement plan be revised to include clearly defined steps for the professional development, explicit teaching, and development of means of assessing and collecting data on the DRSLs.

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 faculty follows the Utah Core Curriculum and is starting to work in departments as professional learning communities to plan for quality instruction that ensures student learning takes place. Some departments are further along in this work than others, but most are in the process of completing curriculum maps, and some have several forms of common assessments to guide instruction.

The Visiting Team commends the work that teachers have been doing in PLCs. It is important, as the school implements more honors programs and the Utah Common Core Standards, that the collaborative work extend beyond the department to foster interconnected opportunities provided by the CCSS.

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

The Visiting Team found little evidence during the course of the site visit of exercises of inquiry, problem-solving, and higher-order thinking skills. Students did report that they are often engaged in active, stimulating learning, but also expressed frustration at spending too much time listening to lectures, taking notes, or working out of textbooks.

While the establishment of honors programs in the core academic areas offers new opportunities for students, care will need to be given to ensure that **all** students will be afforded curriculum and instruction that lends to meaningful learning experiences. The Visiting Team recommends that, as the professional learning communities create curriculum and assessments, teachers explore ways to motivate students as active learners.

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 Visiting Team observed that the school is in the beginning stages of the development of a curriculum that focuses on the DRSLs. For the Effective Writer DRSL, all teachers have been trained in MyAccess, and some teachers are more interested in further training and use of the program than others. A poster was created to by the English Department to illustrate a standardized writing format to be used in all subject areas. The Visiting Team found this poster in some but not all classrooms. The building leadership team will be developing an anti-bullying curriculum to be implemented the fall of 2012.

Just as the faculty was once provided with professional development on reading strategies, it now must engage in a comprehensive study of effective writing with defined expectations for each teacher and explicit instruction—not only in English classes—for students. The Visiting Team recommends that professional development include peer observations, interdepartmental lesson development, and a periodic examination of student work using common rubrics.

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

The Visiting Team commends the Farmington Junior High faculty members for their development and utilization of curriculum maps. Some teachers provided evidence of backward planning designed to assess student learning. However, many teachers reported that the degree to which common assessments have been created in all content areas to ensure that students are reaching the intended learning outcomes varies widely. The Visiting Team concurs with the report of the educational agenda focus group that the school needs "to work on measurable goals that have indicators and use the goals to focus on growth."

The Visiting Team recommends that administrators and teachers reconsider the objective of sharing curriculum maps and common assessments across departments to interconnect intended learning outcomes and better ensure that student intended learning objectives are being met. Teachers reported that maps had been created and shared before, and that attempts to create integrated units were abandoned. However, if this were done to support the integration expected of the Utah Common Core Standards, it would serve to create continuity and deeper learning as students move from class to class.

Instruction:

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

The Visiting Team observed a variety of instructional strategies employed to enhance student learning. Team members observed the following instructional strategies: direct instruction (lecture, lecture/question, lecture/technology), demonstration teaching (modeling a process, concept or experiment for students), collaborative learning activity (structured group task, not simply working together), facilitating independent student work (individual inquiry projects or tasks), laboratory exercise, review activity or game, white board activity (whole-group problem solving, practice sets), and independent work on homework or worksheets.

The Visiting Team commends those teachers who use a variety of instructional strategies, such as utilizing student choice and creativity when assigning independent

work, using PowerPoint to enhance student understanding of curriculum, and using online tools such as music, video, and online textbooks to enrich student learning.

The Visiting Team recommends increased use of instructional strategies that involve peer-to-peer interaction and collaboration among students within the classroom, as well as cross-curriculum learning. Focus group meetings with students and parents revealed the need for students to be able to have time in class to begin work on assignments as it would be beneficial to the understanding of key concepts in subject areas, as well as giving students time to ask questions.

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?*

During the course of the site visit, the Visiting Team observed posters that state the DRSLs hung throughout the school and classrooms.

Through observation and discussion with faculty and students, it is clear to the Visiting Team that the faculty is beginning a concerted effort to emphasize writing in all classrooms. This effort has included training teachers on MyAccess and developing some school-wide standards for writing format. The school has also instituted a number of programs to teach and recognize good citizenship. However, the DRSLs of Effective Writing, Good Citizens and Life-Long Learners are not explicitly taught in classrooms. Overall, the Visiting Team found that students did not know what DRSLs are. It is expected that by an interim visit there will be substantial progress in the articulation and teaching of the DRSLs.

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?*

The school's organizational system and culture are supportive of school improvement and professional development. Teachers have recently had training on the computer program MyAccess and have engaged in a school-wide book study on improving classroom instruction. The leadership team, made up of administrators and teachers, has been trained on professional learning communities.

The Visiting Team commends teachers for attending trainings and staff meetings to help improve on instructional strategies to support student learning. The Visiting Team recommends that future professional development plans include expectations for implementation of new learning and opportunities for teachers to share with one another and with administrators the product of their learning.

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?*

It is clear that the staff at Farmington Junior High School is highly qualified and knowledgeable of current research through individual learning on effective instructional approaches. The work of departments in PLCs is increasing opportunities to collaborate, and teachers reported that in many instances this has been has been the first formal opportunity to engage in reflective planning with their colleagues. This year the faculty has engaged in a book study that has encouraged sharing of strategies. It was apparent to the Visiting Team that teachers cared deeply about their work and its impact on student success. The faculty has pinpointed students who are not proficient in CRTs, and has paired them with faculty and staff members to help these students achieve higher scores on standardized tests as well as in the classroom.

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

Teachers have incorporated the use of software, web-based applications, and technology to enhance student learning. The school has a number of computer labs that are used daily. Specific items used to enhance student learning include UTIPS, online textbooks, MyAccess, Utah Writes, document cameras, and audio-enhancement devices. The school's media specialist has made a priority of providing teachers with information regarding websites and resources that would enhance teaching and learning. The Visiting Team commends those teachers who use a variety of types of technology. Some teachers are starting to use online textbooks. The Visiting Team recommends, as teachers move to online resources, that they make sure there is alignment between the online textbooks with the classroom textbooks to ensure that students can successfully meet homework expectations.

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?*

Through the implementation of professional learning communities, teachers are beginning to develop common assessments within their departments. This work, particularly in mathematics, is starting to have an impact on instructional planning. The Visiting Team observed that clearly stated intended learning outcomes have not yet been established in every department and articulated to students, teachers and parents. Furthermore, although the Math Department now has common assessments for each chapter of the texts they use, the implementation of the Utah Common Core Standard will necessitate significant revision. Likewise, the English Department's development of similar assessments has been hampered by the introduction of the new Common Core this year.

As the Common Core Standards have applicability across subject areas, this will provide an opportunity for the school as a whole to consider what students need to know and be able to do and to backward design to develop more common assessments based on clearly stated intended learning outcomes. The Visiting Team recommends that this begin with the focus of writing as it has application to the school's DRSLs.

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

The Visiting Team commends Farmington Junior High School for its use of Friday professional learning community time to develop common assessments and identify high academic expectations. The focus group identified a variety of types of assessments that are being used to assess students, including authentic assessments and projects such as interpreting a piece of music, creating a movie or a PowerPoint presentation, or writing an essay, as well as more traditional assessments such as multiple-choice and short answer tests.

However, the Visiting Team learned from both parents and students that some assessments did not coincide with the material being taught, or were found only in online textbooks that were not available on all home computers. Students also were concerned that tests are weighted so heavily, but not given until the very end of the term, which adversely affects the term grade if there is poor test performance.

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

The Visiting Team commends the Math Department at Farmington Junior High School for using its use of data-driven instruction. The Math Department uses the data from chapter tests to determine what concepts are not being mastered and plan new instructional methods for re-teaching to ensure students' mastery of concepts. Furthermore, the department identifies teachers who were more successful teaching a concept and shares teaching ideas with those who did not perform as well.

The Visiting Team also commends the administration for identifying students who performed poorly on the Criterion-Referenced Tests and providing those students with additional support through mentoring and Base Camp. The Visiting Team recommends that Farmington Junior High School use the reports available on MyAccess and Accelerated Reading to identify specific learning deficiencies and develop teaching methods to address them.

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?*

For the past year, professional development has been focused on professional learning communities. Teachers are expected to develop common assessments but little professional learning has been dedicated to understanding effective assessment. The Visiting Team recommends that the faculty be provided professional development on how to write intended learning outcomes, backward design and creating assessments.

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

The Visiting Team would like to commend Farmington Junior High School for providing initial training on MyAccess to be used as a tool for address the DRSL of improving writing. While MyAccess is being used effectively by the English Department, it was reported to the Visiting Team that it is not widely used elsewhere, although some teachers expressed interest in further training. Although the administration has suggested that one writing assignment be assigned in every class once a year, a writing rubric has not yet been established, and not every department seems to embrace the DRSL. The Visiting Team recommends that the school leadership team plan for more detailed professional development on writing in the content area and how to assess writing beyond the formatting of a paper, as described on posters seen in many of the classrooms.

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 Visiting Team commends Principal Stephens for his dedication to his teachers and to the development of a school environment that supports learning. While it would be easy to become complacent about the high achievement of the students, it was apparent that there is a shared dedication to making sure that all students have opportunities for success and are given the support that they need. The mentoring and Base Camp are two examples of efforts made by the administration and teachers to assist students who are struggling.

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 school leadership team is making a concerted effort to employ data driven decision-making. During the course of the self-study, the school used surveys and rubrics to assess its strengths and areas of improvement. The school profile illustrated

the degree to which the school is beginning to use various sources of data to guide program development, implementation, and assessment. The school's work in professional learning communities is a beginning step in employing a powerful model of collaboration focused on data.

The Visiting Team recommends that the leadership team establish a data committee to be given charge of coordinating the selection, disaggregation, and interpretation of various forms of data to help drive school improvement efforts. This data should go beyond CRT scores to include continued survey information, behavior information, and summaries of results from the departmental assessments.

This data needs to be routinely shared with all stakeholders.

c) *To what extent does the 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?*

According to the school's survey results, many students, teachers, and parents were dissatisfied with the building's appearance. On the contrary, the Visiting Team found the school to be clean and inviting. Principal Stephens credited Assistant Principal Dick Close with his dedication to turning the perception around.

Students report feeling safe in the school, and while some areas are congested, hallways are generally easy to navigate. Students did ask for more supervision in the hallways and in common areas.

Teachers report that Principal Stephens is always willing to support student learning and is dedicated to working for the resources to improve the learning environment with technology and other resources. He encourages teachers to be their best.

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?*

One of Farmington Junior High's greatest assets is that of its parent community. Parents are very involved in the school and their involvement is appreciated by the teachers and by administration. Parents have credited Principal Stephens with improving home/school communication through better websites and teacher web pages to the weekly email communications.

The teachers work closely with parents, and several instances of teachers going above and beyond to help students succeed were shared by parents to the Visiting Team. Counselors are very responsive to parent concerns and requests. The office staff is personable and inviting. It was clear to the Visiting Team that the education of

students at Farmington Junior High is a shared responsibility between educators and parents.

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 who served as part of a focus group for the Visiting Team reported that they all had at least one adult they could say cares for them. The student survey reveals that students are either neutral or disagree. The Visiting Team observed positive interactions in most cases between adults and students. Counselors are responsive to students, and the school administration has worked to reward and acknowledge student success and to provide support through mentoring.

There is not a formal system of support for every student. Teachers did talk about the work that was done in considering teaming and other middle-level practices, but this was met with some resistance and never took hold. Given some of the faculty and students perceptions about bullying in the school, the Visiting Team recommends that consideration be given to some sort of system that connects every student with an adult.

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?*

There is evidence in the Farmington Junior High self-study document that a school improvement plan has been created with short-term goals. It is noted that creating this plan was a high priority of the new administration, and that teachers had input in its creation. The Visiting Team recommends using the improvement plan to drive instruction using it as the basis for implementation of PLCs and the Common Core writing project.

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?*

It is clear to the Visiting Team that there is ongoing commitment to professional development, as time is set aside on Fridays for professional learning communities

and staff meetings once a month. Teachers are engaged in a book study to improve instruction. Teachers have participated in a MyAccess training to align their curricula with a common writing program.

The Visiting Team notes that there is little accountability and/or documentation provided addressing the agendas and goals of each department during PLC time. Departments need to be held accountable for creating goals, assessments or identifying at-risk students. The Visiting Team recommends that the administration follow up by visiting the meetings, reviewing notes and/or minutes, and reviewing what is being accomplished during PLC time.

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?*

It is clear to the Visiting Team that the action plan addresses the needs of the school based on survey results from last year. Implementation of a writing program is a result of adoption of the Common Core. The Visiting Team recommends that a school-wide rubric for assessment be developed to further fulfill the improvement goals. Further review, implementation, and possible revision of the current plan should be instituted as part of a yearly process.

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

The current administration and faculty see the need for change in improvement in their action plan, collaboration and goals. They have a genuine concern for student learning and have provided the resources such as time to enable teachers to work together. The Visiting Team commends the faculty for its initial work in the implementation of PLCs and collaboration. The Visiting Team recommends that the leadership team maximize the use of early release time to provide ongoing professional development as well, as this will be of equal importance to the PLCs in creating the capacity for continuous improvement.

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

The school's progress since its last full visit has been sporadic. The school did implement a school-wide reading program, with silent sustained reading in all content areas, but it was discontinued in favor of all teachers teaching reading strategies in the content areas. The school also adopted the Read 180 program. Reading scores have improved since the first full visit.

Little has been done to take the DRSLs and institutionalize them into the teaching and learning. In part this is because the school originally had too many DRSLs, and they were not defined to be measurable. The school's self-study is transparent about the

fact that, to a great extent, the work put into the accreditation in 2004 did not go much further.

Teachers and administrators shared with the Visiting Team their interest in school improvement. Work was done through the accreditation process and the development of the self-study, with the intent that it really serves to drive school decisions and actions.

It was clear to the Visiting Team that the school has acted upon some of the elements of the previous action plan, and the teachers and administrators have already begun the process of implementing the new action plan. It will be important that the action plan be reviewed and revised yearly.

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 major recommendations from the previous (2004) visit to Farmington Junior High. The first recommendation asks for an action plan with a timeline of long- and short-term goals. Professional development has included MyAccess training and leadership team training of PLCs. The Visiting Team recommends that the use of backward design be implemented in the planning process so that the end goals are being met.

Second, it was recommended that the DRSLs be revisited to increase staff commitment. The DRSLs were revised, and the Visiting Team commends the implementation of the Effective Writing portion. However, Good Citizen and Life Long Learning need to be explicitly addressed. Students and parents need to be made aware of the purpose of the DRSLs, and work needs to be done to make sure that the DRSLs are incorporated into the daily instructional framework.

Third, differentiated instruction was to be addressed. Although there are many after-school programs and reward programs available to students, parents and students expressed the need for more active learning in the classroom. Struggling students have been pinpointed by CRTs, but there is no evidence of identifying students by any other factors, such as grade point average, demographics or gender.

Fourth, it was recommended that the school develop the means for effective data collection to drive curriculum decisions. The self-study relied on a limited data set, mostly driven by CRT results; in order to gain a more comprehensive view of student achievement, more data sources are needed, such as the Direct Writing Assessments, MyAccess, Accelerated Reading, common assessments, failing rates, behavioral data, etc.

Fifth, the school should align the action plan to the DRSLs. The current action plan does have a clearer alignment to the DRSLs.

Finally, it was recommended that Farmington Junior High continue to seek innovative ways to increase collaboration. The school has implemented PLCs with the intent of fostering collaboration. It will be important that departments be given clear expectations of accountability measures to make sure that each department is moving forward. The Visiting Team commends the school for its implementation of the PLC program, and recommends that the faculty and staff continue to review and revise its practice. The Visiting Team also recommends that the faculty work to extend the collaboration across disciplines to better meet the Utah Core objectives and provide interconnected learning opportunities, as well as address the homework issues around scheduling with which students, parents, and teachers have concerns.

CHAPTER 5: COMMUNITY BUILDING

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

Farmington Junior High is to be commended for its high level of parent and community involvement. A strong Community Council and PTSA are committed establishing positive relationships among themselves, students and staff.

Teachers are progressing in the implementation of PLCs and are focusing on collaborative work within departments. Survey results indicate a need for the faculty to develop some norms of behavior and common understandings. While several teachers are truly committed to collaboration, others are not. This is apparent in some areas, such as homework and discipline.

Parents, faculty and staff members have a high level of respect for the principal and his assistants. Despite having served only a short time, the principal has provided the leadership needed to refocus the school's energy and purpose.

The school's self-study revealed that bullying is an issue, and the faculty and administration are actively taking steps to address it. The student focus group also talked about prevalent issues between students who are of the community's dominant faith and those who are not. Students ask teachers to be more observant of put-downs and to be more proactive about negative behavior.

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

The school works hard to keep parents and community members aware of and involved in school activities. The school actively engages parents and students through a weekly mass emailing written by the principal. The PTSA is very active in the school, as is the Community Council. Parent support for programs, such as the

music program, includes hundreds of hours of volunteer work. If teachers want something, parents will be willing to work for it.

Parents would like to see better communication through teacher web pages.

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

The Visiting Team commends the school on producing a self-study that highlights the school's accomplishments, along with an honest portrayal of areas needing improvement. The faculty, parents, and students realized through surveys that bullying and homework were areas of concern, and are working on ways to remediate problems.

The school made several efforts to involve all stakeholders in the self-study process. Parents, teachers and students were involved in the focus groups. If the school is intent on making sure that the process is not merely for the accreditation visit and serves more as a means of school improvement, some form of the focus groups should stay intact so that the results may be reviewed and revised on a yearly basis.

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

Results of the school improvement plan and surveys were discussed in PTSA and Community Council meetings. The Visiting Team recommends that the self-study, survey results, testing results and other data be posted on the school's website.

CHAPTER 6: MAJOR COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Commendations:

- The Visiting Team commends Farmington Junior High as a school where powerful learning experiences happen daily for students. The administration provides important leadership and has a vision that has been clearly articulated to teachers, parents, and community members. Teachers care about their students and about their subject areas. Parents are integral partners in education, and their support is both valuable and valued.

- The Visiting Team commends Farmington Junior High for setting high standards for all students and providing many opportunities for students to gain the knowledge and skills they will need for high school and beyond. Course offerings are rich and varied,

and there is something in the school for everyone. The school environment is positive and safe for students, and they are happy there.

- The Visiting Team commends the promising work of teachers as part of professional learning communities. Teachers are committed to their own professional growth and the collaboration necessary for school improvement. The administration is purposeful in supporting educator growth and improvement.

Recommendations:

- As the work of the PLCs continue, it will be important that teachers develop common assessments based on intended learning objectives. The Visiting Team recommends that this work be part of an accountability system where the data can be used to drive instructional decisions and personal professional growth for educators. Learning objectives and the means by which they will be assessed also need to be clearly articulated to students.

- The Visiting Team recommends that, since the school has narrowed the focus of the DRSLs, the DRSLs now be refined with measurable assessments and rubrics that can be used across disciplines. The DRSLs need to be institutionalized through the explicit teaching to students. Both teachers and students should be able to measure performance of the DRSLs.

- The Visiting Team recommends that, with the implementation of the Utah Common Core in mathematics and language arts, the school take this opportunity to consider how the standards apply in all disciplines and to incorporate the college and career ready standards in all classes. Just as teachers have begun collaboration in their departments, doing so across the grades by sharing curriculum maps, aligning assignment and testing calendars, and creating integrated units of study will provide the means for students to apply skills and knowledge in a contextual framework. Attention should be given to creating active learning experiences, from assignments to assessments.