The Report of the
Accreditation Visiting Team

Fort Herriman Middle School

14050 South Mirabella Drive
Herriman, Utah 84065

May 6-7, 2009

Utah State Office of Education
250 East 500 South
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Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-4200

THE REPORT OF THE
VISITING TEAM REVIEWING

Fort Herriman Middle School

14050 South Mirabella Drive
Herriman, Utah 84065

May 6-7, 2009

UTAH STATE OFFICE OF EDUCATION

Patti Harrington, Ed.D.
State Superintendent of Public Instruction

DIVISION OF
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FOREWORD

The major purpose of the accreditation process is to stimulate school growth and improvement so as to increase 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. It is a three-phased 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, May 6-7, 2009, 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 Fort Herriman Middle 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 Rodney Shaw is also commended.

The staff and administration are congratulated for their desire for excellence at Fort Herriman Middle School, and also for the professional attitude of all members of the group, which made it possible for them to see areas of weakness and strength and to suggest procedures for bringing about 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 even more 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 Fort Herriman Middle School.

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FORT HERRIMAN MIDDLE SCHOOL

ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF

School Administration

Rodney Shaw ..... Principal
Chris Titus ..... Assistant Principal
Amber Zdunich ..... Assistant Principal

Counseling

Karen Gochnour ..... Counselor
Steve Giron ..... Counselor
Lula Isaacson ..... Counselor

Support Staff

Juliann Allen ..... Food Services
Emily Bartholomew ..... Counseling Center
Ivan Bills ..... Custodial
Teri Bird ..... Attendance Office
Jo Black ..... Cafeteria
Carolyn Blaine ..... Food Service
Debra Bowen ..... Food Service
Jodi Bowles ..... Food Service
Jan Callister ..... Food Service
Alys Campbell ..... Media Center
Karen Cloward ..... Food Service
Lori Densley ..... Food Service
Shaylyn Doriarque ..... Food Service
Glenda Eisenberger ..... Food Service
Elizabeth Geddes ..... Food Service
Valorie Godfrey ..... Copy Room
Karen Hansen ..... Food Service
Patricia Herret ..... Food Service
Marci Ingram ..... Counseling Center
Janet Jensen ..... Counseling Center
Tigran Karsyan ..... Custodial
Beth Lamphear ..... Food Service
Jennifer Leiter ..... Food Service
David Lloyd ..... Custodial

Marianna Madsen..... Food Service
Colett McKissick .....504 Aide
Wendy Miller ..... Special Education
Cara Miller ..... Custodial
Heather Pearce ..... Custodial
Linda Platt ..... Food Service
Tricia Shields ..... Food Service
Melinda Smith.....Hall Monitor
Julie Thelin..... Attendance Office
Nadine Troxel .....Head Secretary
Jo Ann Ward ..... Food Service
Jackie Young.....Resource

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Leslie Allen
Elizabeth Anderson
Troy Ball
Harrison Beckett
Chris Bergum
Marshall Brown
Stephanie Clegg
Craig Cordero
Randall Crawford
Kelli Crooks
Brandee Davis
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Ida Strang
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Denise VanHeiden
Jenny Ward
Jim Weimer

FORT HERRIMAN MIDDLE SCHOOL

MISSION STATEMENT

Our Mission is to provide a safe, stable and enjoyable environment in which students attain knowledge and personal success, embrace diversity and develop skills and values for lifelong achievement in a changing world.

BELIEF STATEMENTS

1. Fort Herriman Middle School believes all students can learn and learning is our highest priority.

2. Fort Herriman Middle School believes our instruction allows students to apply learning in a relevant and meaningful context for their lives.

3. Fort Herriman Middle School believes all students learn in different ways and we strive to accommodate diverse learning styles through a variety of instructional and assessment strategies.

4. Fort Herriman Middle School believes each student is a valuable individual with unique needs and we work toward meeting those needs through the services and resources we offer.

5. Fort Herriman Middle School believes a safe, positive and comfortable school environment promotes supportive relationships and fosters student learning.

6. Fort Herriman Middle School believes students, teachers, administrators, support staff, parents, and outside stakeholders share the responsibility to promote student learning.

7. Fort Herriman Middle School is committed to continuous improvement to promote opportunities for success and to enable students to become successful, confident, self-directed, life-long learners.

DESIRED RESULTS FOR STUDENT LEARNING (DRSLs)

1. Character Development – Students will become positive contributing members of their communities, by implementing our rattle traits into their daily lives.

2. Communication – Students will be able to effectively communicate with others using a variety of mediums.

3. Continuous Learning – Students will be able to apply learning in a relevant and meaningful context for their lives

4. Critical Thinking – Students will be able to apply knowledge and strategies to effectively work through everyday situations.

Date of visit: May 6-7, 2009

MEMBERS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Steven K. Hirase, District Office, Murray School District, Team Chair

Cathryn Davies, Mount Logan Middle School, Logan City School District

Georgia Loutensock, Curriculum and Instruction, Utah State Office of Education

Lisa Taylor, Roosevelt Junior High School, Duchesne School District

VISITING TEAM REPORT

FORT HERRIMAN MIDDLE SCHOOL

CHAPTER 1: SCHOOL PROFILE

Fort Herriman Middle School, located in the farthest south west corner of Jordan School District, has a relatively short history and is only in its fourth year of existence. The school is located in Herriman, Utah, which has enjoyed long, rich pioneer history. Although Mormon pioneers established the Fort Herriman area in 1851, a school was not part of the community until Herriman Elementary was built in 1999.

Herriman City has largely been an agrarian, farm community, with a number of original families still making up a large part of the city's population. With the housing boom and unprecedented growth in the southwest portion of the valley, Herriman has begun to transform into a more suburban setting with an agrarian feel. Fort Herriman Middle School enrollment has reflected the growth of the city. In August 2005, the school opened its doors to 725 students and 25 teachers. Currently, in its fourth year of existence, the school's enrollment has grown to just over 1,200 students, and it has a staff of over 45 certified teachers.

The parents of students at Fort Herriman Jr. High have a high level of involvement in their children's education. The community at large has taken a very active role in the education process at the school and has set high expectations for their students and the school. Due to the community and the effort of the school administration and staff, Fort Herriman Middle School was one of 18 schools nationwide recognized for its efforts to increase parental involvement.

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

The Visiting Team, through its analysis of the school's profile, observations, and interviews with staff, students, and patrons, found the following findings:

- A high level of collaboration among staff members.
- A focus as a faculty on student achievement.
- An experienced staff (9.0 years average).
- A high percentage of staff members with advanced degrees (65 percent).
- A high level of communication between parents and staff members.
- An accurate portrayal of the school in the school profile.

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

The Visiting Team recommends that the school consider providing disaggregated data related to the school discipline data included in the school's profile. In addition, the school should also consider providing n-sizes in the school achievement data reported (CRT). Finally, the school should consider providing achievement data related to the common assessments developed through the school's professional learning communities, as well as assessments developed to measure students' progress on the school's DRSLs.

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

The Visiting Team was confident that the self-study developed for the school's accreditation accurately reflects its current strengths and limitations.

Suggested Areas for Further Inquiry:

- Include analysis of data collected by the individual departments' common assessments.
- Include analysis of data collected related to students' progress on the school's DRSLs.
- Identify ways to integrate PE and CTE into the collaborative process.

CHAPTER 2: NORTHWEST ASSOCIATION OF ACCREDITED SCHOOLS (NAAS) 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?*

All stakeholders were involved in the development of the school's mission and beliefs statements. The process began with discussion, then creation and finally adoption of the mission and belief statements. During the process the belief statements were reduced and combined from twelve to seven.

The mission statement was created and adopted after the belief statements were in place. The faculty felt that the mission should reflect the beliefs. Six mission statements were created and rated as to clarity, conciseness and incorporation of the beliefs. The final mission statement was adopted in spring 2008.

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

After the mission and beliefs were adopted, the Fort Herriman Middle School faculty began the process of defining the school's DRSLs. The DRSLs were designed to align and directly reflect the mission and beliefs. Each teacher reviewed and submitted DRSLs and their definitions. The four DRSLs chosen—Critical Thinking, Character Development, Communication and Continuous Learning—were consistently submitted by faculty members. This process is representative of the collegial and collaborative culture at Fort Herriman Middle School.

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

The DRSLs were completed, adopted and implemented during the current school year; specific indicators have not been designed. However, the DRSLs are already part of the culture of the school. The DRSLs are part of the decorations in the main hallway in large letters in banner form along and across the halls. The DRSLs are also posted in every classroom and incorporated and spotlighted in classroom instruction.

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?*

At Fort Herriman Middle School the mission, beliefs and DRSLs are the very foundation of all school procedures, policies and decisions, and are evident in every aspect of the school.

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*?*

Collaboration, standards and benchmarks are the driving force behind Fort Herriman Middle School's curriculum. Teachers use the Utah Core Curriculum to drive instruction, and the climate and DRSLs closely reflect the Utah Life Skills benchmarks.

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

In classroom after classroom, the accreditation team saw projects, labs, experiments and research, as well as a multitude of other assignments and assessments that require students to reach beyond the basics and to use higher-order thinking skills. In many classrooms, students were so excited about what they were doing that not a single student was off-task or not engaged.

The Rise and Stretch program is specifically designed to involve students in activities that promote problem solving and higher-order thinking skills.

The accreditation team commends Fort Herriman Middle School for its development and implementation of a curriculum that gives all students an opportunity to learn on all levels of Bloom's Taxonomy, especially the higher levels.

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 members of the teaching staff at Fort Herriman Middle School have all been an important and valued part of the process, and each department has worked hard to develop the DRSLs and curricula that support and even emphasize the DRSLs.

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

The accreditation team commends Fort Herriman Middle School for the Rise and Stretch program in the core classes. This program is a great example of what a school can do to catch students who are not learning certain concepts. Even though the school has plans to implement the program throughout all departments, the accreditation team cautions that because of the nature of CTE classes, fine arts and physical education, Rise and Stretch as it is done in the core classes could be problematic. Fort Herriman Middle School is strongly encouraged to continue with this program in solid subject areas and encourage the exploration of it in others. The accreditation team encourages the administration to listen to the concerns of the departments not currently doing Rise and Stretch to create a program that benefits students without putting undue stress on teachers.

The accreditation team saw evidence that some departments use their assessments, both common and individual, to drive instruction. Many teachers, however, use their assessments more as an end-of-unit evaluation. The accreditation team recommends that teachers take a look at assessments, both formal and informal, as well as end-of-year testing to make curriculum decisions and to drive instruction.

Instruction:

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

Through classroom visits, it is apparent to the Visiting Team that the teachers use a variety of instructional strategies to enhance student learning. The teachers use various catch-bell activities to begin their classes, including energizers that the students especially enjoy. Some teachers like to begin class with an open-ended question that sets the stage for their classes, explore various answers, and then review what the students learned about it at the end of class. Teachers keep students involved by using activities such as writing, listening, group discussions, student presentations, memorization, and hands-on activities.

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?*

The Visiting Team observed evidence during classroom visits that all teachers display posters with the school's mission statement and the DRSLs. The students see these posters on the walls in the hall as well as on the school's web page. The staff members at Fort Herriman Middle School work in professional learning communities, and part of the work of the school's PLCs is to define and implement the school's DRSLs within the classroom setting. The school has also made the development and implementation of the DRSLs an integral part of the school's action/improvement plan.

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 has determined its professional development needs through the analysis of school-level data, including language arts, mathematics, and science CRT data; school climate data; school discipline data; and stakeholder perception data (Indicators of School Quality – ISQ). Departments get together and identify their strengths and recommendations for growth. Based on the areas identified for growth, the school and each individual department has determined its professional development needs.

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?*

All teachers are certified in their content areas, and all teachers are NCLB highly qualified. All teachers complete a self-evaluation survey, and reflect on their teaching and adjust accordingly. The teachers use curriculum mapping to see their assignments and activities align with the State Core and adjust their teaching

accordingly. Many teachers feel the core mapping helps them to continually emphasize core standards throughout the year.

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

To the members of the Visiting Team, Fort Herriman Middle School seems to have a well-defined plan for integration of technology; most teachers have access to projectors and speakers, document cameras, Smart Boards, classroom response systems, etc., giving them immediate access to information, videos, and photos from the Internet. The teachers feel that access to computer labs is easy and never a problem. Staff members commented on the willingness of the school administration to support their requests for technology in the classrooms.

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?*

The staff has developed and implemented several classroom and common departmental assessments based on the State Core Curriculum.

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

Fort Herriman has developed and maintains a culture of collaboration and interdependence. Curricular maps and departmental common assessments are two results of collaboration. Most single-teacher departments participate in district meetings and are working on common assessments for their courses.

The Visiting Team observed little evidence of assessment criteria in the form of rubrics or student self-assessments. When asked, students in some classes did not have a clear understanding of how their work would be graded.

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

Fort Herriman uses CRT, DWA and classroom assessments to measure its success in achieving its academic expectations. Several teachers indentified assessments they use to assess student achievement periodically throughout the year. Rise and Stretch is a program that has been implemented in the school to identify and re-teach students based on a weekly or bi-weekly assessment of particular concepts.

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?*

The professional development program at Fort Herriman is centered on collaboration. The PLC structure encourages teachers to collaborate within both cross-curricular pods and their specific content areas.

Several departments have developed and implemented common assessments. The Visiting Team observed a wide range of assessment activities, including projects, student presentations, portfolios, and journals, as well as traditional pencil-and-paper quizzes, guided reading, etc.

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

Due to the newness of the school and the DRSLs, no scoring tools have been developed. Discussion has begun regarding full implementation and assessment of the DRSLs.

CHAPTER 3: NAAS 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?*

During the course of the 2008-09 school year, the school administration was changed at Fort Herriman, with a principal appointed in December 2008 and two assistant principals appointed in March 2009. In spite of the challenge created by the change in administration, the Visiting Team found strong, compelling evidence that the school leadership fosters an extremely positive academic learning climate and provides excellent support for teaching and learning. The school administration has been very successful in the accreditation process, establishing a collaborative process that actively involved all stakeholder groups. Interviews with parents, students, and faculty members indicate a high degree of respect and support for the efforts led by the school administration.

The Visiting Team commends the school on the strength of its leadership and has a high level of confidence that the school will be successful in its implementation of the school action plan, and that these efforts will have a positive impact on student achievement.

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 Visiting Team observed evidence that the decisions made by the school leadership are data-driven and research-based. The goals that have been identified in the school's action plan are a direct result of the school profile and the data contained in that profile. The action steps identified to meet the goals are directly tied to research-based strategies and best practices.

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 Visiting Team was able to identify a strong connection between the school's use of resources, both fiscal and human, that are directly aligned with school goals, DRSLs, and general school improvement efforts. The school administration provides resources for staff members to engage in professional learning activities that have a direct impact student learning in the areas of need identified in the school profile. The other plans required by the school district—the school improvement plan (CSIP) and the school land trust plan—are aligned with each other, and funds available through the land trust program provide a means for funding activities identified in the action plan and school improvement plan.

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 Visiting Team found evidence of the school leadership's successful efforts to empower the school learning community in the collaborative process that was used in the school's accreditation process, as well as in the development of the self-study. Interviews with members of the school leadership team, focus group leaders, etc. suggest that the contributions made in the course of these efforts were acknowledged and valued, and were incorporated in the school profile and action plan.

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?*

Although the school has a mechanism in place to provide a formal connection between the teachers and students through a TA class, the Visiting Team found little evidence that this class period was being utilized for its intended purpose. The Visiting Team

recognizes and commends the school for the proposed changes in this class period for the 2009-10 school year. The Visiting Team believes that assigning a student to the same teacher for the course of his/her enrollment at Fort Herriman Middle School will provide a vehicle for the adult staff members to know the students well, and a means for assisting students in achieving the school's expectation for student learning.

CHAPTER 4: NAAS 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?*

Fort Herriman Middle School is a model school with regard to the Utah accreditation/ school improvement process. Because the school is only four years old, stakeholders have worked from its inception, using the change process, to develop ongoing goals and plans to build an exceptional school. Staff members at Fort Herriman Middle School informed the accreditation team that they started this process a year and a half ago; however, the process truly started when the school opened. There is evidence that the teachers hired to come to Fort Herriman were those that were amenable to the change process, who were willing and excited to collaborate, and who are willing to do whatever is needed for the benefit of students.

The Visiting Team wants to commend the faculty and staff at Fort Herriman Middle School for their dedication to the accreditation process, and for their diligence in looking at the school critically and then working together as school stakeholders to create an improvement plan. The accreditation team also wants to commend the school for not only creating a plan, but also implementing it, working diligently, and moving forward with the goals. The accreditation team is confident that Fort Herriman Middle School will continue with the change process and working toward implementing the school's DRSLs and action plan.

The accreditation team is especially impressed with the departmental collaboration day in the fall, during which the school provides substitutes for an entire department so that its members can meet for an entire day. This type of collaboration fosters unity within the department, as well as the time needed to resolve issues and build curricular maps, scopes and sequences, and assessments.

The Visiting Team recommends that Fort Herriman Middle School continue its efforts to include all teachers, no matter their content area, in the collaboration

process. The accreditation team also recommends that a greater variety of teachers be given opportunities to fulfill leadership responsibilities.

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 Visiting Team wants to commend Fort Herriman Middle School, as well as Jordan School District, for their vision regarding ongoing professional development and collaboration. The Visiting Team is impressed with next year's planned implementation of late-start Fridays in order to allow for two-and-a-half hours of collaboration and teaming time each week. With the development of the school centered around pods as well as the implementation of professional learning communities, Fort Herriman Middle School is an example to other schools of terms of collaboration and teaming.

The Visiting Team saw much evidence of alignment of units, projects and standards; several departments even have next year's plans already in place. The Visiting Team feels that Fort Herriman Middle School is a step ahead with regard to current and new state alignment standards, and wants to commend Fort Herriman Middle School for its efforts in this regard, which can be seen as the example for other schools.

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 faculty and staff of Fort Herriman Middle School are very aware of the areas for change and growth in their school, and have created an action plan that sufficiently addresses these issues. The Visiting Team wants to commend the school in that four of the school's action plans are simply the school's DRSLs broken down with goals and timelines. The alignment of all the areas of the self-study is commendable. Not only do the first four action plans directly address the four DRSLs, the DRSLs themselves are an action plan. The Visiting Team wants to commend the school for making the DRSLs an integrated part of the school's climate in a driven and purposeful way.

The Visiting Team also commends Fort Herrman Middle School for creating an academic goal of math improvement and recognizing how it fits into the DRSLs. The Visiting Team sees concrete evidence that the accreditation process is the driving force behind the school.

When first reviewing the self-study, the Visiting Team was concerned that there were too many action plans that were, perhaps, not realistic in what the school was trying to accomplish. After the school visit, however, the Visiting Team sees how much the atmosphere of change and the support of the DRSLs and the action

plan have been woven into the school's atmosphere, and sees that Fort Herriman Middle School's action plans are appropriate for what this school is capable of and the direction in which it is already heading. In fact, some of the school's action steps—such as those under the goal of communication, regarding the improvement of the school's website and teachers setting up blogs—are already in process.

The teachers and staff at Fort Herriman Middle School are extremely committed to moving forward and making the action plans a reality.

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

From the beginning of Fort Herrman Middle School, the school's climate has been about productive change and continuous improvement. The school is dedicated to and centered around what is best for students, and works diligently to meet the students' changing needs.

CHAPTER 5: COMMUNITY BUILDING

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

Fort Herriman Middle School is working diligently to foster community building within the school, with the addition of common preparation periods, late-start Fridays with collaboration time before school, and with the fall department out-of-class work day.

The Visiting Team recommends that leadership responsibilities be divided among more staff members, instead of having a few doing most of those kinds of work, to foster a greater sense of personal ownership in the school for all staff members.

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

Fort Herriman Middle School is in the process of developing greater communication and collaborative networks. The Visiting Team recommends the establishment of community business partnerships. The Visiting Team commends the school for having a strong Parent-Teacher Organization. The Visiting Team recommends that continued efforts to create community collaborative networks be pursued.

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

Parents and students were involved with the focus groups and are still involved through parent-student-teacher organizations. Community business leaders were invited as well, but none attended. The Visiting Team recommends that community business leaders be personally invited by the focus group chair, and be encouraged to give a verbal commitment in order to help encourage them to be more active in this process as a stakeholder in the school.

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

The school improvement data has been clearly identified and documented, and is used to drive curriculum, programs and instruction across the school. The Visiting Team recommends that the school continue its efforts to communicate to parents and the community the events and successes of the school through the website and blogs. One suggestion would be to have a public relations person (a teacher or secretary) who can get events into the local newspaper.

CHAPTER 6: MAJOR COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Commendations:

- The Visiting Team commends the school staff members for their level of commitment to the students of Fort Herriman Middle School. The Visiting Team observed a high level of collaboration and camaraderie among staff members. Teachers are willing to invest a significant amount of time to implement changes that have a direct impact on student achievement. Staff members are keenly aware of the current research on educational practices, and have often initiated changes to improve student learning. As evidence, school staff members started the Rise and Stretch program which addresses individual student learning. Additionally, staff members have taken an honest look at their departments and have identified areas of improvement. The Visiting Team found many instances in which the staff has already implemented changes to address recommendations for growth.

- The Visiting Team commends the school administrators on the leadership and direction they have given to the school. Providing a school with direction and making the changes necessary to increase student achievement is difficult at best. Under the direction of Principal Shaw, the school is moving ahead, with student achievement being the focus for changes. The Visiting Team commends the

administration for providing a positive climate and a culture that is supportive of collaboration and school change.

Recommendations:

- The Visiting Team recommends that the school and staff continue their efforts in the development and implementation of tools to measure progress on the school's DRSLs. These should be stated in specific terms, including clear indicators that are observable and measurable. The school should investigate means of reporting progress, on both a school-wide level and an individual student level, related to the indicators for each DRSL.

- The Visiting Team recommends that the school investigate opportunities for additional learning opportunities for students. This would include additional elective courses, extra-curricular activities, and after-school programs that enhance student learning.

- The Visiting Team recommends that the school continue its efforts in the areas of professional learning communities and collaboration. The Visiting Team also recommends that the school administration ensure that collaboration time is dedicated to the school's efforts related to professional learning communities and interdisciplinary teaming.