

**The Report of the
Accreditation Visiting Team**

**Murray High School
5440 South State Street
Murray, Utah 84107**

March 15-16, 2011



**Utah State Office of Education
250 East 500 South
P.O. Box 144200
Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-4200**

**THE REPORT OF THE
VISITING TEAM REVIEWING**

**Murray High School
5440 South State Street
Murray, Utah 84107**

March 15-16, 2011

UTAH STATE OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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State Superintendent of Public Instruction**

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Salt Lake City, Utah

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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 15-16, 2011, 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 Murray 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 Scott Bushnell is also commended.

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

Larry K. Shumway, Ed.D.
State Superintendent
of Public Instruction

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*Board of Regents Appointments

**CMAC Representative Appointment

****Charter School Representative Appointment

**UCAT Representative

****USBA Advisory Representative Appointment

12/28/2010

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Rod Pace Supervisor, Buildings and Grounds
David Trujillo..... Supervisor, Child Nutrition Program
Colleen SmithCurriculum Teacher Specialist

MURRAY HIGH SCHOOL
ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF

School Administration

Scott Bushnell..... Principal
Dolph Church..... Assistant Principal
Debbie Sorensen..... Assistant Principal

Counseling

Gordon Kener..... Head Counselor
Amy Knox..... Counselor
Stacey Murdoch..... Counselor
Larry Swim..... Counselor
Deb Ashton..... Safe and Drug Free Schools
Heather Preece..... Social Worker
Rob Couraud..... CTE Coordinator
Joan Anderson..... Work-Based Learning Coordinator

Support Staff

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Margaret Lewis..... Administrative Secretary
Patty Smith..... Receptionist/Secretary
Kathy Chappell..... Financial Secretary
Patty Ward..... Counseling Secretary
Donna West..... Registrar
Sherry Njord..... Registrar Assistant
Debbie Hymas..... Careers Secretary
Jolene Stephens..... Media Center Aide
Alcarita Martinez..... Copy Center Aide
Shelley Parker..... Attendance Secretary
Karen Winther..... Attendance/Citizenship Secretary
Rodney Jackson..... Security
Madeleine Kerksiek..... Security
Julie Mellus..... CTE Aide
Wayne Page..... CTE Aide
Trevor Morse..... CTE Aide
Lana Walker..... Special Ed Aide
Kari Sturgeon..... Special Ed Aide
Tom Stokes..... Special Ed Aide

Rosalyn Fairbanks.....Special Ed Aide
 Robin Call Outreach Mentor
 Wendy PickleMath Tutor/SLCC Facilitator
 Melissa Erickson..... Math Tutor

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Isacchar Beh	Julie Hatch	Lisa Parker
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Cindy Berry	Belva Helms	Erick Perry
Haley Binggeli	Lisa Heyborne	Valerie Peterson
Nancy Brown	Eric Himle	Grayce Rees
Alison Bulson	Andy Hokanson	Paul Reynolds
Jodi Butler	Audra Kasparian	Kris Rice
Jie Chen	Anna Knudsen	Amber Rogers
Monte Christensen	Leesa Lloyd	Amber Rydalch
Chris Cowan	Ian MacDonald	Will Saxton
Aaron Daniels	Robert Mayo	Steven Scheidell
Cathy Davis	Ashley McSwain	Alan Scott
Josh DeMoux	Jenilee Medell	Jake Shewmake
Laura DeShazo	Wade Meier	Virginia Smith
Paul Drake	Kirk Mittelman	Crystal Spackman
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Melia Fidel	Larry Monson	Lisa White
Colby Ford	Hilary Moore	Richard White
Alan Gatenby	Kay Morgan	Rob Wilson
Keeko Georgelas	Tomoko Moses	Keith Wood
Joe Gibbs	Starlyn Nackos	

MURRAY HIGH SCHOOL

MISSION STATEMENT

MHS is dedicated to every student's academic and personal success.

BELIEF STATEMENTS

Accountability - We believe the administration, faculty, and parents share responsibility for student success and the students benefit from the learning opportunities Murray High School provides when they are held accountable for their actions.

Learning - We believe every student is capable of achieving high academic standards. Teachers collaborate in the development of a rigorous curriculum, instructional best practice, and measurable assessments that engage students in authentic learning.

Quality - We believe exceptional instruction results from ongoing professional development and the use of state-of-the-art technology. Quality is the result of teachers working to improve their skills and by students making the most of their educational experience.

Respect - We believe in ethical behavior and appropriate conduct. We honor diversity by treating every student and staff member with respect.

Safety - We believe students are safe and secure at school. Murray High School is an open and responsive environment in which teachers and students can participate, learn and succeed.

Success - We believe all students become successful by improving their knowledge, skills and abilities.

DESIRED RESULTS FOR STUDENT LEARNING (DRSLs)

1. **An Effective Communicator** –
 - Students use oral, written, artistic and mathematical forms of expression to effectively gather, develop and communicate ideas.
 - Students seek information by actively listening and responding to others' ideas.
2. **A Responsible Citizen** –
 - Students demonstrate values such as trust, respect, responsibility, integrity and citizenship.

- Students demonstrate accountability for their attendance, behavior, and interactions with others.
 - Students contribute to the community and show respect for ethnic and cultural diversity.
3. **A Successful Problem Solver** –
- Students employ a variety of strategies including critical thinking and logical reasoning to solve problems.
 - Students develop new and creative ideas by taking risks and formulating multiple solutions to problems.
 - Students use multiple resources to form and test hypotheses, analyze results, and make valid conclusions.

Date of visit: March 15-16, 2011

MEMBERS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Rodney Shaw, Fort Herriman Middle School, Jordan School District, Visiting Team
Co-Chair

Catherine Jensen, Utah State Office of Education, Visiting Team Co-Chair

Ron Bailey, Farmington Junior High School, Davis School District

Todd Dawson, Snow Canyon Middle School, Washington County School District

Maile Loo, Hunter High School, Granite School District

Kristin Packer, Westlake High School, Alpine School District

VISITING TEAM REPORT

MURRAY HIGH SCHOOL

CHAPTER 1: SCHOOL PROFILE

Murray High School serves approximately 1,500 students. The school is the only high school in Murray School District. The district serves about 7,000 of the students who live in the city of Murray. The city profile has changed over the past few years with the development of a large medical facility and other large businesses within walking distance of the school. Murray High School has a long tradition of being the center of community. Parents express a sense of caring and community in the school and the district as a whole.

During the last six years, the school has seen an increase in minority students from about seven percent to close to 20 percent. The minority students come from many varied backgrounds, with the most recent being refugees from the Middle East. This has resulted in a significant increase in the English language learner population. In addition, Murray School District has closed its alternative high school and reintroduced that population into the mainstream of Murray High School. The school has made appropriate system and programmatic changes in order to meet the changing needs of the student population.

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

The Visiting Team commends the school for the concise reporting of student achievement data. The profile gives a picture of which groups of students are learning and where the achievement gaps fall. The school has expressed concern for low student achievement in math and biology and is taking steps to improve achievement in those areas. The CTE data reflects a very low passage rate on competency tests for several courses. The school is also commended for its efforts to track other significant school data, such as attendance and behavior intervention.

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

The Visiting Team recommends that the school develop a system of data collection, dissemination and evaluation based the implemented DRSLs. Every teacher should have access to the progress of each student at a given point in time. While the Visiting Team was told the data exists in departments, we saw no evidence of tracking the progress of individual students or using the data to adjust instructional programs on the DRSLs.

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

The current profile accurately reflects achievement data for groups of students, Advanced Placement classes, CTE tests and college entrance exams. The school has been willing to examine its current reality and accurately reports that reality, warts and all.

Suggested Areas for Further Inquiry:

- The Visiting Team suggests that the school develop the time and methods to review data at the individual student level. While group data has its place, knowing the performance level of an individual student helps facilitate the development of appropriate interventions and/or accelerations.
- The Visiting Team suggests that the school continue to collect and reflect on standardized testing data, demographic trends, behavior interventions and other data that should be frequently used to guide the work of the school. This should be extended to the department and subject level. While some evidence exists that data is effectively collected and evaluated, the school is encouraged to refine this practice. The collection of data is significant only if it informs the instructional practices and programs of the school community.

**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?*

Murray High School's report provided a time line showing the development of the school's new mission statements and the revisiting of the DRSLs. The mission statement was changed from "Murray High School will provide a quality education, which prepares each student to meet academic, employment, and life needs" to "Murray High School is dedicated to every student's academic and personal success." The school felt that the mission needed to be more focused. From the findings of the Visiting Team, it appears the mission statement was created in a collaborative process. The leadership committee wrote the statement and presented it to faculty for approval. The process of writing and establishing a vision statement and belief statements appeared to have been a collaborative process involving teachers, students, administration and parents. DRSLs were reviewed collectively, and it was felt that they did not need to be changed. Murray High School is still committed to the DRSLs that were created six years ago. The established DRSLs give the school a common

direction for professional development, a direction focused upon student achievement. There is little evidence, however, that the student body understands or knows the DRSLs.

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

Murray High School's mission statement emphasizes the development of academic and social skills to promote lifelong learning. The DRSLs fit under this broad umbrella. The mission statement was created after the school had decided to keep the DRSLs that it had in place. Murray High School's belief statements are aligned with the schools mission and DRSLs.

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

It is the finding of the Visiting Team that some work has been done in the past six years to institutionalize the DRSLs that were created from the first site visit. The school chose to focus upon the "Effective Communicator" DRSL after the first accreditation visit in 2005. A school-wide writing rubric was created that is being used as a measurement tool for all students. However, the rubric is not being used by all departments and teachers. Many teachers said that they are using the school-wide rubric and tracking the students' scores for improvement; however, there was no presentation of that data to the Visiting Team.

- 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 is the finding of the Visiting Team that the school's progressive effort to implement a professional learning community is a guiding and unifying effort that is directly tied to the school's mission and commitment statements. However, the school's DRSLs are not explicitly evident in the culture of the school. Most students could not articulate the DRSLs or school goals, and DRSLs are not embedded into instruction. The mission statement and DRSLs are posted in each room; however, there was no discussion of the DRSLs as they relate to curriculum and instruction.

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 Visiting Team has reviewed the course curriculum maps that Murray High School has provided online for patrons, and is impressed that every course has a curriculum guide available for those interested. While reviewing individual

departments, it was noticed that most of the courses make reference to the State Core Standards in their curriculum maps. The Visiting Team recommends that each department review yearly its course objectives and standards and update those revisions online so that the material is current. The school should also encourage elective courses to make reference to State Core Standards where applicable.

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

Murray High School provides a wide variety of courses and opportunities for students to excel academically. Many visited classes were engaged in problem-solving activities and inquiry-based learning. Others were involved in traditional learning activities. The Visiting Team recommends that the staff at Murray High School continue implementing higher-order thinking skills and problem-solving activities into the curriculum. Along with creating these activities and opportunities, assessment tools need to be established to evaluate the effectiveness of the activities in the classroom. These activities will help Murray High School implement the Problem Solving DRSL.

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

Murray High School has spent the last six years institutionalizing the written portion of its Effective Communication DRSL. Assessment tools have been developed and shared school-wide in order to come together in implementing the Action Plan Goal #1. While visiting with teachers, the Visiting Team found that the entire staff is emphasizing in the importance of writing (assessing) across the curriculum. The Visiting Team commends Murray High School on its consistency in institutionalizing Action Plan Goal #1.

The Visiting Team recommends either furthering the work on the Effective Communication DRSL and focusing on verbal strategies while continuing to work on writing, or beginning work on one of the two other DRSLs.

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

Murray High School has begun work on implementing PLCs into the school day. Currently, teachers meet once or twice a month to collaborate on aligning curriculum and reviewing assessment tools. Data is being generated and collected from various assessments. It is not apparent whether the data results are driving modifications and changes in the presentation of the curriculum.

The Visiting Team recommends that Murray High School continue implementing PLCs and evaluate the structure of the time given in each department. It would be

beneficial to implement time for data review and examine how it can guide instruction and curriculum development.

Instruction:

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

The teachers of Murray High School use a wide variety of instructional strategies. During the visits to various classrooms, the Visiting Team witnessed demonstration, simulation, peer tutoring, cooperative learning groups, direct instruction, individual Internet research on laptops, project work, hands-on learning, and PowerPoints. The faculty has done a great job of varying types of instruction to assist students in learning.

- 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 school is implementing its Effective Communicator DRSL throughout the school, mostly by employing an across-the-board writing program. Each class is required to have at least one writing assignment per term, which is graded using a faculty created rubric based on the Six Traits of Writing that is basic enough to be used in any area of study. The Visiting Team observed writing samples in various subject areas; writing samples were even viewed in a physical education class, leading the team to believe that it truly has become part of the fabric of the school. The staff endeavors to identify students who are below reading level by testing all incoming sophomores. As the area of need was determined to be writing and reading, oral communication has been largely ignored; however, the Visiting Team encourages the faculty to return to including oral communication as a component of the DRSL as soon as possible.

- 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 professional development plan created by the Community Council of Murray High School focuses on improving pedagogical practices, especially in the areas of reading, writing, and math skills. Teachers are instructed in methods of improving math and reading scores in various content areas. Additionally, funds are available at teacher request for attending professional development such as conferences, though Murray School District has a moratorium on paying for travel during the current economic downturn.

- 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, endorsed, and qualified in the classes they are currently teaching. The Visiting Team notes that all teachers appeared well versed in their content and the above-mentioned differing instructional strategies. The Visiting Team encourages the faculty to maintain knowledge of educational research and endeavor to stay at the forefront of this important part of the educational process.

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

Murray High School is currently in the third year of a five-year plan. The goal of the five-year plan is to have a 1:1 ratio of computers to students. The school is well on its way to reaching this goal. The Visiting Team is heartened by this development, considering current financial difficulties, and applauds the school's efforts in this regard.

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 at Murray High has focused on developing classroom and school-wide assessments. Each department has worked through professional learning communities in department groupings to develop content-specific common assessments. The school-wide assessment in place is the writing rubric that is currently used in all content areas to identify student progress toward achieving the 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 staff at Murray High School uses a variety of assessment strategies to assess individual progress in achieving academic expectations. The Visiting Team saw evidence of many types of formative assessments, including class discussions, quizzes, written and performance-based tests, written response, and peer evaluation. School-wide progress is assessed through CRTs and other end-of-level testing, with appropriate data from such tests made available to teachers.

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

The staff at Murray High School uses data to assess the success of the school in achieving its academic expectations. While the data collected is generally of a summative nature, there is evidence throughout the building that formative assessment is taking place regularly. Visiting Team members did not observe the collection of formative assessment data.

While understanding the level of achievement on CRT tests is important, the Visiting Team recommends that the staff focus its data discussions on student learning needs as the school moves forward with planning and instruction.

- 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 Visiting Team commends the staff at Murray High School for creating a regularly scheduled time for professional development, including collaboration on assessment strategies. Though the professional development is regularly scheduled, the Visiting Team recommends that teachers continue to find ways to collaborate more frequently in order to better inform instructional decisions.

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

There is organizational agreement on the use of a school-wide scoring tool to assess the identified DRSL. All teachers in all departments have committed to the use of the writing rubric to assess the Effective Communicator DRSL. The Visiting Team recommends that tools be established to assess the other DRSLs identified by Murray High School.

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 leadership is commended for its focus on student learning. The leadership has taken the lead in the development and implementation of PLCs. School leaders and teachers speak the language of learning as the constant, with time and support as the variables. Most teachers have made the paradigm shift from focusing on teaching to focusing on learning. The next steps are to use student-learning data to inform and adjust instructional practices.

- 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 bases decisions on the impact those decisions will have on learning. The leadership is effectively leading the implementation of the collaborative process through professional learning communities to ensure a rigorous and uniform curriculum for each student in each subject area. The next steps are to ensure the development of common formative assessments and their use to increase student achievement on the summative evaluations. The leadership has provided focused professional development on effective instructional 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 commends the school leadership for ensuring that all aspects of the management, organization, and allocation of resources support the school agenda.

- 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 is commended for its empowerment of the entire school community. The School Community Council and PTSA report that they have been given a voice in the decision-making process of the school. The faculty is organized in PLCs in order to have a positive impact on student learning. A school leadership team composed of teachers and administrators works to develop a professional development plan to further the effectiveness of teaching. All stakeholder groups reported having meaningful input in the decision-making process.

- 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?*

Murray High School is in the fourth year of TEAMS, which is a student advocacy program. Each teacher has a TEAMS class. The teacher serves as the advocate, mentor and safe-harbor for the students in the class. The class stays with the same teacher for the entire three years at Murray High. Administrators, teachers, and parents all report this as a very valuable program. Students know which teachers effectively use this class, and appreciate the support they get in TEAMS. Students also report their frustration with teachers who do not follow the program. Steps should be taken to ensure the effective implementation of TEAMS by every teacher for every student.

School Services:

This standard is dealt with in the school's NAAS 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?*

Murray High School has made some great progress in implementing the school improvement process. The school is commended for gaining teacher buy-in to the school improvement efforts. The faculty has been involved in the process, and faculty members have served on focus groups, PLCs, leadership cadre, etc.

- 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?*

Faculty members are a part of the PLCs, and this program is department driven, with teachers working to improve the curriculum through use of formative and summative assessment. Professional development has been focused on the DRSLs and other needs of the school.

- 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?*

During the last five years, the faculty has concentrated on the action steps in the areas of effective communication, problem solving, and responsible citizenship. The faculty made a decision to focus its efforts on the reading and writing goals, and decided to

forgo the oral communication goal. The school leadership team should report on progress for every item on the action plan at each meeting.

In addition, all aspects of the action plan need to be revisited and assigned to individuals for accountability purposes.

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

Murray High has developed a culture of open and honest dialogue among all stakeholders. Parents expressed that the administration, counselors and teacher were easy to approach, open to their concerns, and willing to help solve problems. Murray's warm climate allows the faculty, staff, students and parents to honestly express opinions, concerns and compliments regarding all aspects of the school.

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

The work of the school over the last six years has been focused on embedding the DRSLs and prioritizing areas of concentration and developing measure for assessment of the DRSLs. It is recommended that the school revisit the action plan so the plan can be used to monitor progress on achieving the school goals.

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

Murray High has made great progress in professional development regarding best practices. Several teachers voiced appreciation for the opportunities they have had to improve their skills in curriculum implementation, teaching strategies, and the use of assessment.

CHAPTER 5: COMMUNITY BUILDING

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

Murray High School has a positive and productive working relationship with all constituents and programs. There are very strong bonds and a healthy, productive, working relationship among the administration, staff, teachers, and students at Murray High. This unity has helped to create a safe learning environment for the students.

The administration and teachers show great concern for the success of their students and have taken steps to help them to succeed. This includes implementing various clubs and courses to fit the needs of all students.

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

The school actively engages parents and families as partners in the learning process through a variety of programs, resources, and instructional materials. Some of these avenues of communication include the automated calling machine, e-mails to parents, the SEOP process, the student handbook, district newsletters, weekly attendance reports, midterm reports, etc.

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

Murray has attempted to engage some parts of the school community in the self-study process through the Community council, parent-teacher conferences, surveys and newsletters. The Visiting Team recommends that the school include a greater number of parents and students in the school improvement process. With the unique ethnicity and socioeconomic factors at Murray High, a variety of tools need to be explored to get parents and students actively involved in school activities and the school community.

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

The school is commended for involving students and community members in the focus groups. In addition, the students and parents were well informed of the school goals and the writing rubric. The Visiting Team recommends that the school continue to communicate its improvement plan, the implementation of the DRSLs, and annual goals to all stakeholders.

CHAPTER 6: MAJOR COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Commendations:

- The Visiting Team commends Murray High School for its fidelity to the accreditation and self-study process. The school exhibits a culture of continuous learning and improvement in order to increase student achievement.

- The Visiting Team commends Murray High on its steps to implement a culture that focuses on measured student learning. The full establishment of professional learning communities will help to ensure greater levels of student achievement.
- The Visiting Team commends the school for its great sense of community. The school community is extended through internships, business partnerships and “Murray Pride.”
- The Visiting Team commends Murray High for the diversity of course opportunities offered to its students. Students have multiple opportunities to take courses of interest that are fun, challenging and rigorous. Murray High School should be commended for the number of AP and concurrent enrollment courses that are being offered.

Recommendations:

- This Visiting Team recommends that the school continue its journey toward full implementation of the professional learning communities model. Next steps should include development of common and frequent formative assessments used to inform and adjust instructional practice. In addition, the school should develop a school-wide intervention system to ensure “learning as the constant, with time and support the variables.”
- Within departments there was much discussion and evidence of a collaborative culture; however, there was little evidence of cross-curricular collaboration. Key academic concepts apply across instructional areas. The Visiting Team recommends that Murray High work diligently to establish programs and academic activities that involve multiple disciplines.
- While the implementation of the TEAMS class has provided a mentor and advocate for each student, the Visiting Team recommends that Murray High School expand its definition of student achievement to the individual student level and not “group” performance only. Each individual should be recognized at his/her individual performance level, with appropriate interventions and/or extensions provided.
- The Visiting Team recommends that Murray High School revisit the written action plan. There are many important tasks that have been identified as necessary for continued school improvement. Many of the action plan tasks are not written in SMART goal format (specific, measurable, attainable, results oriented and time bound). The open-endedness of the time lines makes everyone responsible, so nobody is responsible. If a task is “ongoing,” there is no accountability for completion.
- The Visiting Team recommends that Murray High School continue to fully institutionalize the “Effective Communicator” DRSL. In addition, Murray High School should institutionalize a second of its three DRSLs during the next six-year accreditation cycle.