

**The Report of the
Accreditation Visiting Team**

**Primary Children's Medical Center School
Wasatch Canyons Campus
5770 South 1500 West, Bldg. E
Salt Lake City, Utah 84123**

June 6, 2011



**Utah State Office of Education
250 East 500 South
P.O. Box 144200
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**THE REPORT OF THE
VISITING TEAM REVIEWING**

**Primary Children's Medical Center School
Wasatch Canyons Campus
5770 South 1500 West, Bldg. E
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June 6, 2011

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, June 6, 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 Primary Children's Medical Center School—Wasatch Canyons Campus 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 Mary C. Nelson is also commended.

The staff and administration are congratulated for their desire for excellence at Primary Children's Medical Center School—Wasatch Canyons Campus 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 Primary Children's Medical Center School—Wasatch Canyons Campus.

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*Board of Regents Appointments

*** CMAC Representative Appointment

*****Charter School Representative Appointment

**UCAT Representative

****USBA Advisory Representative Appointment

12/28/2010

**PRIMARY CHILDREN'S MEDICAL CENTER SCHOOL
WASATCH CANYONS CAMPUS**

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**PRIMARY CHILDREN'S MEDICAL CENTER SCHOOL
WASATCH CANYONS CAMPUS**

ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF

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Louise Fischman

**PRIMARY CHILDREN'S MEDICAL CENTER SCHOOL
WASATCH CANYONS CAMPUS**

MISSION STATEMENT

While our students/patients are hospitalized in day or residential treatment, they have opportunities to maintain academic skill levels, identify and improve academic deficiencies that impede school progress, develop new academic skills, receive academic enrichment, and correct behavioral, emotional, and social deficits associated with lack of classroom success. In addition, we help each student/patient make a successful transition to a safe school environment that meets his/her educational needs.

BELIEF STATEMENTS

Our belief is that all students can experience success in school if given adequate support.

DESIRED RESULTS FOR STUDENT LEARNING (DRSLs)

The school does not define DRSLs in the traditional sense. The school has adapted the concept of developing a school-wide learning goal for all students. The goal is to help all students progress and find success according to each student's Individualized Education Plan.

Date of visit: June 6, 2011

MEMBERS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Robert Stillwell, Accreditation Consultant, USOE/NWAC, Visiting Team
Chairperson

Pam Scott, Behavioral Health Institute, McKay Dee Hospital, Ogden, UT

VISITING TEAM REPORT

PRIMARY CHILDREN'S MEDICAL CENTER SCHOOL WASATCH CANYONS CAMPUS

CHAPTER 1: SCHOOL PROFILE

The Primary Children's Medical Center School began operating in 1971. The school first became accredited in 1990. Primary Children's Medical Center School is the educational component of the Department of Behavioral Health, Primary Children's Medical, and a fully accredited hospital with Intermountain Health Care. Primary Children's Medical Center School—Wasatch Canyons (PCMC—WC) is a special purpose school designed to meet the needs of students who are in treatment for psychiatric disorders and/or chemical dependency issues. It offers residential and day treatment, and serves children ranging in age from twelve to eighteen years.

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

The school program is a controlled setting in which students can implement social and emotional coping skills acquired through treatment. The goals and objectives center on the development of an individualized treatment plan for each student, thereby helping the student make changes in their cognitive, emotional, and behavioral functioning.

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

The Visiting Team recommends that the school modify its school profile to measure student progress on agreed-upon desired results for students learning. There are useful ways in which behaviors can be measured on such goals as personal and social responsibility and or lifelong learning.

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

The 2011 self-study was a thorough and honest description of the program. The school faces challenges of growth that require carefully planning the expansion of programs on the campus.

Suggested Areas for Further Inquiry:

- Consider defining some behaviors that are appropriate to be developed into school-wide desired results for student learning.

- Collect and report student academic gains.

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?*

Wasatch Canyons School engaged in a collaborative process to develop a mission and belief statement that reflects the unique needs of the students the school serves. The process involved educators, parents, and members of the clinical staff. The desired results for student learning were theoretically understood and practiced by the school team members; however, they were not identified as DRSLs, but rather as individual treatment goals. Wasatch Canyons also had goals for responsible behavior in the classroom that seemed to be school-wide. The Visiting Team recommends that the school community define school-wide goals as DRSLs, in addition to maintaining individual goals within treatment plans.

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

It was evident to the Visiting Team that the DRSLs or treatment goals and classroom goals encompass the vision and mission of the school, which is to help students maintain their academic skill level while engaged in therapeutic treatment.

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

The DRSLs or treatment goals are measured by clearly defined, short-term objectives through the treatment plan. The clinical team meets weekly with educators to discuss and update each student's individual plan. Success is measured by completed objectives on the treatment plan and is explained through clinical notes in students' charts. Goals for responsible behavior in the classroom are monitored through use of a daily tracking sheet, which is reviewed by the student, parent, and teacher each day and kept in the clinical record.

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

The school centers around helping students succeed in their individual goals. Much organizing and planning has gone into designing the program to be responsive to the needs of its students.

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?*

Based on observations and interviews with educators, the Visiting Team found that the curriculum and instruction at Wasatch Canyons supports the Utah State Core standards. The school collaborates with area school districts to ensure that its curriculum is current and aligns with the standards and timeline of the community schools.

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

Wasatch Canyons serves students with various levels of understanding and significant mental health and substance abuse issues. Sometimes, due to the severe behavior of a student, it is necessary to provide services outside of the classroom in a restricted area. It can be challenging to teach in those extreme circumstances, but the team at Wasatch does an excellent job. The Visiting Team commends these educators, who use a variety of instructional strategies and techniques every day to meet the unique needs of these often difficult 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 clinical team, which includes educators, meets daily to discuss individual student and program goals. They work together to provide the tools necessary for each student to become successful. Students are reminded of the school-wide goals on their daily trackers. They discuss treatment goals with their therapists and teachers weekly, and incorporate them into the daily academic setting.

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

The Woodcock-Johnson III Achievement battery is given to all students upon admission. This is used, along with information from the students' community school, to drive the educational program of each student and determine appropriate placements. Classroom assessments and teacher observations are utilized to measure weekly progress. The Visiting Team recommends that the school consider using these assessments to measure academic progress in the program.

Instruction:

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

Many students at Wasatch Canyons School are reluctant learners and require one-on-one attention from teachers and staff members. The Visiting Team observed educators at Wasatch Canyon demonstrating a wide variety of teaching techniques to enhance individual student learning, including small group instruction, classroom discussions, video presentations, role-playing, and creative projects. (The use of certain manipulative and laboratory experiences is not incorporated due to safety precautions unique to this population.)

- 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 DRSLs themselves are not explicitly taught, but elements of the DRSLs are evident in the classrooms. The teachers recognize that there is a need to create a tool to analyze and detail the data that is currently being utilized.

- 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?*

Although it is difficult to incorporate professional development into this unique setting, there is support for continuous learning. Teachers are encouraged to attend trainings and workshops offered through the State Office of Education and local school districts. The Visiting Team commends the educators at Wasatch Canyons School for their collaboration with the community to promote continual improvement.

- 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?*

Teachers at Wasatch Canyons are certified special educators. They also work closely with classroom teachers in local school districts to provide a strong curriculum that is based on the State Core. They meet often to reflect on their teaching practices and collaborate to develop quality classroom approaches for the unique students they serve.

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

Due to the nature of the program at Wasatch Canyons, student Internet use is highly restricted. Computer use is allowed when appropriate and is closely monitored.

Teachers make use of other technology such as television, videos, and projectors in their classrooms when available and appropriate to the content of their lessons.

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?*

School-wide assessments are used to provide individual goals for each student. Classroom assessments are tied to the performance-based standards identified by teachers. Students know the expected level of performance in each subject and how to meet it.

- 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 observed that the school-wide assessment is the Woodcock-Johnson III. It is used to gather baseline data to support appropriate grade-level work. Teachers differentiate instruction and academic goals based on this test as well as informal assessments and observation. Each student has an individual plan that is revised and updated weekly. Students are required to take assessments in each subject area with a minimum level for mastery of 80 percent.

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

Teachers and staff members at Wasatch Canyons gather data on an individual basis, tracking the progress students make toward achieving their treatment plan goals. This data is reviewed by clinicians and educators weekly and is the driving force for students' individualized programs. The Visiting Team recommends that the school staff consider analyzing part of this data to measure the success of the school program as a whole.

- 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?*

Teachers at Wasatch Canyons are provided with structured time each day to collaborate and plan for classroom instruction and assessment. Information gathered from each student's community school, such as 504 plans, behavior intervention plans, and IEPs, provides continuity and consistency with the regular school program. The Visiting Team commends the staff members at Wasatch for their relationship and collaboration with area schools.

- 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 observed that Wasatch Canyons School uses tools to assess individual student progress as part of treatment planning, but did not observe a school-wide scoring tool to assess identified goals. The Visiting Team observed that discussion is taking place to start this process, and recommends that a rubric to evaluate the school program as a whole be created as part of a continued school improvement process.

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 climate is one of high expectations for students to improve on their treatment issues while experiencing school success.

- 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 staff is heavily oriented toward special education. The teachers use student data daily to track progress, and they attend special education law conferences.

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

The school is separated according to the gender of the students, and teachers are shared. The environment is calm and purposeful. The campus is gearing up for the addition of more students, as the hospital administration has chosen to consolidate more programs onto the Wasatch Canyons campus.

- 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 has, to a great extent, promoted collaboration among staff members to bring about student success in making gains on individualized goals.

- 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?*

There is excellent teamwork among the staff members from the educational and clinical programs to ensure that each student is well known to the professionals on the care-giving teams. The purpose of the school centers on helping students make progress on individualized treatment and education plans.

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?*

The school is unique. It has participated in third-party accreditation for over twenty years. Four of the five teachers are endorsed in special education. They have not followed each section of *Collaborating for Student Achievement*, but they have completed an appropriate self-study for school improvement.

- 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 school does invest in the professional development of its teachers. The core teachers, who are all endorsed in special education, attend special education law conferences to keep abreast of the rights of their students and the responsibilities the school has as a providing agency.

- 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 action plans address teacher collaboration and prepare for the realignment of the campus for additional programs. It is recommended by the Visiting Team that the school develop an additional action plan to set goals for improving student achievement.

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

The school displays a high level of teamwork among the school faculty members and the clinical team. They are continuously improving.

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

The school shows progress by sharing case studies of students who have made gains while enrolled in the school.

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

No recommendations were made by the previous Visiting Team.

CHAPTER 5: COMMUNITY BUILDING

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

There is strong teamwork within the school faculty and with the therapists. There are clear expectations about each student's goals.

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

There is excellent integration between education and clinical programs. Before students are discharged, there is also communication with the community-based school to which they will transition.

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

The school developed its own questionnaire to gauge student's perceptions on how to increase their success in school. The results have been carefully analyzed so that the school can balance academics and socialization.

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

Student achievement was shared through selected case studies showing gains for individual students. The questionnaire detailed students' perceptions about school experience. The school staff members have demonstrated that they use data to drive decisions. The details of program improvements are shared within the Behavioral Health Department and with the trustees.

CHAPTER 6: MAJOR COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Commendations:

- The Visiting Team commends PCMC—WC for the high degree of communication between the school and parents regarding the individual progress of students.
- The Visiting Team commends PCMC—WC for the organization and teamwork of staff members to collaborate for student success.

Recommendations:

- The Visiting Team recommends that PCMC—WC develop school-wide DRSLs that will be measured. Large goals for student achievement can be identified, such as Personal and Social Responsibility and/or Lifelong Learning.
- The Visiting Team recommends that PCMC—WC develop action plans to set goals to improve student learning.
- The Visiting Team recommends that PCMC—WC integrate the behaviors measured on the daily tracking sheets with showing progress on meeting school goals.