The Report of the
Accreditation Visiting Team

Rocky Mountain Junior High School

4350 West 4800 South
West Haven, Utah 84401

February 22-23, 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

Rocky Mountain Junior High School

4350 West 4800 South
West Haven, Utah 84401

February 22-23, 2011

UTAH STATE OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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

DIVISION OF
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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, February 22-23, 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 Rocky Mountain Junior 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 William Grilz is also commended.

The staff and administration are congratulated for their desire for excellence at Rocky Mountain Junior 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 Rocky Mountain Junior School.

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

12/28/2010

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Kathy Harris ..... Supervisor, School Lunch

ROCKY MOUNTAIN JR. HIGH SCHOOL

ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF

School Administration

William Grilz ..... Principal
Karla Porter ..... Assistant Principal

Counseling

Kathy Lynch..... Counselor
Ron Farnsworth..... Counselor
Kami Paulsen……Counselor

Support Staff

Secretaries/Aides
- Connie Brown
- Nanette Hodges
- Shirley Stokes
- Susan Maw
- Catherine Adair
- Barbara Allred
- Tiffany Andersen
- Katie Bailey
- Leslie Beus
- Nora Bills
- Sandra Buck
- Cristy Ferrin
- Julie Gochis
- Gentrie Hodges
- Jeanene Holley
- Tiffany Linford
- Teresa Ruotolo
- Mary Smith
- Dianna Wheeler

School Lunch
- Linda Tingey
- Dana Bingham
- Elizabeth Brown
- Shawna Carmichael
- Shelley Coroles
- Lisa Farrell
- Marcia Harvey
- Tamara Hess
- Julie James
- Matt Miller
- Jo Taranto

Custodians
- Gordon Millard
- Trent Anderson
- Jeff Coffey

Officer
- Paul Miya

Computer Tech
- Jeff Wayment

Nurse
- Kellee Wayment

Faculty

Allen, Jeremiah
Armstrong, Bettie
Arrowsmith, Uli
Blood, Dawn
Call, Janine
Cox, Tiffany
Davis, Gary
DeGarlais, Marisa
Draper, Lisa
Eddington, Scott
Fox, Linda
Green, Tamara
Hadley, Jenifer
Hansen, Sharyce
Harmer, Dan
Harmon, Annette
Higgins, Laura
Jackson, Stacey
Jorgensen, Wendi
Lamb, Lola Jean
Lambert, Rich
Marble, Helen
McAbery, Chuck
Miller, Pete

Moser, Shelley
Nish, Mindy
Patton, Sherry
Powell, Karl
Richeson, Vickie
Rippon, Rod
Saunders, Thomas
Smith, Allen
Smith, Mike
Sportsman, Trudy
Storey, Mark
Suttlemyre, Adam
Toledo, Adam
Urban, Rachel
Utley, Sarah
Wallis, Janice
Webber, Suzan
Wray, Shane

ROCKY MOUNTAIN JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

MISSION STATEMENT

"We prepare today's students for tomorrow's world."

BELIEF STATEMENTS

- Student learning is the priority of Rocky Mountain Jr. High School.
- Students and staff need a safe, inviting, learning environment.
- Literacy and numeracy are essential to all learning.
- Each classroom must have adequate and appropriate technology available.
- Education s a shared responsibility of the student, family, school and community.
- Deserved recognition, positive reinforcement, and appropriate consequences should be consistent.

DESIRED RESULTS FOR STUDENT LEARNING (DRSLs)

1. LIFELONG LEARNING

    - Students will develop literacy and numeracy skills, along with basic knowledge in social studies, science, technology, healthy lifestyles, and an appreciation for culture and the arts.

2. COMPLEX THINKING AND PROBLEM SOLVING

    - Students will gain reasoning, logic, problem-solving and study skills.
    - Students will use these skills in the confines of the classroom and gain the ability and confidence to gather and use information in future education and throughout life.
    - Students will be exposed to existing and emerging technology.

3. COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION
    - Students will be willing and able to receive and share ideas clearly, both verbally and in writing.
    - Students will develop communication and social skills in order to be a valuable part of a team, or a team leader.

4. RESPONSIBLE CITIZENSHIP

- Students will learn in the classroom, a broad spectrum of core values including: tolerance, respect, responsibility, accountability, accountability, honesty, integrity, and trust, which will contribute to their employability.
- Students will demonstrate understanding of their responsibility to society by following school rules, policies and procedures.

Date of visit*:* February 22-23, 2011

MEMBERS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Verneita R. Hunt, Granite School District, Visiting Team Chairperson

Jake Hunt, Lincoln Academy Charter School

Willa Jamieson, Eisenhower Junior High School, Granite School District

Chris Keime, Fairfield Junior High School, Davis School District

Doug Webb, Lehi High School, Alpine School District

VISITING TEAM REPORT

ROCKY MOUNTAIN JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

CHAPTER 1: SCHOOL PROFILE

Rocky Mountain Junior High School was built on a tract of barren land in western Weber County located near Country View Elementary. Construction began in 1993 and was completed in time for the start of the 1994-95 school year.

The population of the school has changed significantly in the 17 years that it has been open. In 1994 Rocky Mountain Junior High integrated approximately 900 students from three neighboring junior high schools. The faculty and staff at that time numbered 70. Within the next three years, the school's population grew to over 1,100 students and six portable buildings were placed in the student drop-off zone. In 2001 the school lost 13 staff members with the realignment of boundaries. The portables were removed and the student population decreased to approximately 850.

In an effort to utilize facilities throughout the district, the school's boundaries were again modified for the 2004-2005 school year. The changes resulted in the loss of about 200 students and several teaching and aide positions. Four portable classrooms have been added since Rocky Mountain Junior High's last accreditation; this has helped to decrease class sizes, keeping the average to approximately 32.

Rocky Mountain Junior High currently serves students in grades seven, eight, and nine from the communities of Hooper, Kanesville, Taylor and West Haven. The elementary schools that feed into Rocky Mountain Junior High are Country View, Hooper, Kanesville and West Haven. Rocky Mountain students may choose to attend Fremont High School or Roy High School.

The current staff of Rocky Mountain Junior High consists of a principal, an assistant principal, two full time counselors, one part-time counselor, 42 teachers, one media specialist, one computer lab manager, four secretaries, 16 aides, three custodians, one resource officer and one part-time computer technician.

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

The Visiting Team was impressed with Rocky Mountain Junior High's school profile. It was concise and clear, with information that gave a good "snapshot" of the school. The student data in the profile was enlightening and adequate for the Visiting Team's beginning discussions.

The Visiting Team found that Rocky Mountain Junior High's population is very homogenous, with a total of one to four ELL students in any given year. This was

significant, in that the data would be difficult to disaggregate according to ELL students without revealing specific students.

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

The Visiting Team recommends that the bell and master class schedules and a map of the school be added to the school profile.

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

Rocky Mountain Junior High School administration and teachers were honest in their self-study evaluation. Each of their department and focus group analyses listed strengths and recommendations for growth. Many of those recommendations included cross-curricular collaboration and common core implementation.

Suggested Areas for Further Inquiry:

- Disaggregate data by gender.

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

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

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

The Visiting Team found that, throughout the accreditation process, the mission and DRSLs have remained the same. The school worked collaboratively to revise its beliefs. It is evident that the school has collaborated together to focus on the DRSL of Responsible Citizenship. In visiting with students and parents, it became evident that they have been actively involved in the development of the mission, beliefs, and DRSLs. The administration has listened, and all stakeholders had a voice in the process.

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

The Visiting Team found that the mission and beliefs are aligned with the DRSLs. The teachers, staff, community and administration have been using the mission and

beliefs to support the school's DRSLs for the last six years. They are posted in classrooms and hallways. In visiting with students, it was obvious they all know and understand the mission.

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

The Visiting Team found the administration and teachers are collecting data through a pre- and post-test on harassment instruction. They also collect data on suspensions, tardies, discipline, and absences. They have institutionalized the ROAR program (**R**espectful, **O**n time and prepared, **A**ctively engaged in learning, **R**esponsible), which consists of a reward for students who are doing great things in class and are showing responsible citizenship. Students know the expectations and embrace the ROAR program. The school should be commended for the program and the success students are achieving.

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?*

Teachers are using the Advisory period to teach character education once a week. In talking with parents and students, the Visiting Team found that they both believe students are more responsible than before Advisory and ROAR were implemented. These programs have become part of the culture of the school.

The school has had a change in administration since the last accreditation. The new administration is using the mission, beliefs and DRSLs as guiding principles. The teacher leaders have bought into the school mission, beliefs, and DRSLs, as well as students, parents, and the staff. It is recommended that the school continue to move forward with its goal to share and demonstrate the use of the mission, beliefs and DRSLs.

Curriculum:

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

The staff meets monthly on a late-start schedule. For the first 30-45 minutes, the faculty meets as a whole, and departments are charged with sharing and modeling best practices and encouraged to use best practices in their classrooms. For the rest of the late start time, the faculty meets in Professional Learning Communities. Within these departments teachers ensure that the curriculum meets state standards and students are prepared for CRT tests. For example, the Math Department has created common assessments at the end of each unit for Algebra I students, and is developing

these tests for the other math classes. Some next steps for the faculty are to align the curriculum across subjects and to create common assessments in like subject areas.

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

The Visiting Team commends the staff for the active teaching observed during the visit. Classroom visits revealed that most students were engaged at a high level in most curricula. By means of differentiated instruction and research-based, effective teacher strategies, efforts were made to engage most students with the curriculum. For instance, the Science Department had students grouped into pairs working on higher-order thinking projects. Another science class used inquiry as the teacher demonstrated the effects of dry ice on the PH level of liquids. Also, parents commented about the ability of students to choose a type of differentiated project to demonstrate knowledge, rather than having the entire class assigned the same project. Additionally, students' behaviors within the classroom demonstrated they were engaged in the lesson and active participants in the learning process.

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

Through observation and interview by the Visiting Team, the faculty members have diligently worked to implement the Responsible Citizenship DRSL. They created the ROAR card program and distributed it to students. Over the course of the next couple of years, faculty members strived to recognize students who were doing good things. With continued focus on highlighting the positive as well as administrative follow-through on disciplinary procedures, the school community has noted a significant improvement in student behavior. The students made it clear they like the ROAR program, and that it has made a positive difference in student behavior.

The school's twenty-minute Advisory period is used every Wednesday to teach and assess DRSLs.

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

The Visiting Team observed that all departments are taking ownership of their Professional Learning Communities. For instance, the Science Department gives the same assessment on scientific method to each grade level at the end of the year. This assessment focuses on understanding and implementing the scientific method. The teachers in the Science Department help each grade level understand the scientific method and how it relates to their course of study for the year. The Math Department uses benchmark common assessments to determine who is learning, as well as when the curriculum needs modifying. Future plans include more common assessments school-wide. The Visiting Team encourages the continuation of this process to improve student learning.

Instruction:

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

The Visiting Team noted a wide variety of instructional strategies used within classrooms at Rocky Mountain Junior High. These included portfolios, performance tasks, research projects, role playing, differentiation, student journals, group projects, oral presentations, and student-created products. Teachers were observed to have numerous engagement strategies they employed during their lessons, as well as when students were working independently or in small groups. Many teachers were observed and stated that they regularly use a wide variety of technology in their instruction.

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?*

Rocky Mountain Junior High, in its efforts to explicitly teach the Responsible Citizenship DRSL, has created a school-wide rubric for assessing student citizenship, scheduled time for monthly instruction and discussion of issues during Advisory time, conducted harassment/bullying training with pre and post assessments, set clear guidelines and consequences for student behavior, and created ROAR cards as student rewards for responsible citizenship. The staff has shared ideas for teaching the DRSL in PLCs and in a shared online folder, as well as in a blog of resources for both teachers and students. The staff has invested a significant amount of time over the past few years in developing a monthly working program within Advisory to address this DRSL, and is constantly reviewing it as a work in progress. This has also provided a vehicle for teaching students to take responsibility for their own actions with regard to both academics and citizenship. Students are beginning to internalize these lessons and are making connections to their daily lives as well as their future endeavors.

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 Visiting Team found that the Rocky Mountain Junior High staff has a working professional development program that involves each department taking ownership of a monthly lesson in best practices for the rest of the staff. Monthly late-start days are set aside to facilitate this training within the staff by fellow staff members. By taking part in this in-house professional development, the staff has taken ownership of its progress and has become more vested in its success.

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

The staff members at Rocky Mountain Junior High was found by the Visiting Team to be very proficient in their various content areas and willing to search out the latest in current research to better facilitate their effectiveness in the classroom. Staff members are willing to work together and be reflective on their own, as well as each other's practices and to share their knowledge and experience with each other. The Visiting Team noted the staff is highly cohesive and very supportive of each other, the students, and goals of the school.

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

The Visiting Team observed that most of the staff members at Rocky Mountain Junior High use some form of technology on a daily basis. It was noted that classrooms are fitted with LCD projectors, and many of the teachers are using them as well as other forms of technology ranging from computers to document cameras and Smart Boards. All staff members have a readily accessible blog on the school website, and many maintain it at fairly regular intervals. It is apparent that the teaching staff is fairly open to the use of technology within their classrooms to further enhance 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?*

The school-wide ROAR rubric, based on life skills education, is an example of clearly articulated expectations for student achievement. Teachers use this rubric to assess citizenship and give citizenship grades. The rubric and standards are publicized throughout the school, and students and faculty know and understand the expectations.

Departments have worked together to create common assessments. The Math Department has common assessments for algebra students at the end of each major section. Teachers are working on creating these common assessments for other math classes. The Science Department also uses a common assessment on the scientific method at the end of each year. The Visiting Team found that other departments were creating common assessments or were in the beginning stages of creation. Common assessments will better will better answer the four school identified questions of their Professional Learning Communities. The Visiting Team notes that the leadership team and faculty hope to improve literacy by developing a reading program and school-wide writing rubric.

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

At Rocky Mountain Junior High, all students are assigned to an advisory period. Their advisory teacher works with them for all three years. During the weekly advisory time students are taught the school DRSLs and read, make up homework, and discuss academic progress with their advisory teacher. The Visiting Team commends the faculty of Rocky Mountain Junior High for its continued adaptation of the advisory period to meet the needs of students.

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

The administration and school leadership teams review end-of-year testing data. They create recommendations for coming years based upon the data. Additionally, each year core class teachers are given the results of CRT testing and have the opportunity to review and modify their teaching based on these results. During their PLC collaboration time, the faculty uses all kinds of student achievement data to review student success and drive instruction.

The English Department at Rocky Mountain Junior High use My Access consistently to adjust instruction and track student progress. DWA assessments are reviewed and also used to modify 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?*

During faculty meetings and late-start times, different types of assessment strategies are covered. Teachers conveyed to the Visiting Team the many ways they assess students. Teachers continually assess students through informal assessments given throughout the class period. Assessments can be as simple and informal as questions and answers, observations as the teacher walks around the room, or a short quiz at the beginning of the class. Formal assessments are given at the end of units. Teachers communicated to the Visiting Team the need to use different types of fill-in-the-blank, multiple-choice and essay questions to allow students to demonstrate their knowledge in multiple ways. Furthermore, they feel that allowing for projects, reports, group presentations, and many other forms of assessment used in conjunction with standard paper-and-pencil tests improved student engagement, competency, and success.

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

Rocky Mountain Junior High developed the ROAR rubric as a tool to assess the Responsible Citizen DRSL. This rubric, combined with other efforts, has helped

Rocky Mountain Junior High institutionalize the Responsible Citizen DRSL. Other activities coinciding with the ROAR rubric are harassment and bullying training (including a pre and post assessment to evaluate the effectiveness of the training); Operation Validation Week (to validate and build character in all members of the school community); and advisory time (where faculty members get to know a student group for three years as they track his/her grades and provide character education lessons).

CHAPTER 3: NORTHWEST SUPPORT STANDARDS

Leadership and Organization:

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

The Visiting Team found that teachers, students, staff, and parents of Rocky Mountain Junior High genuinely expressed positive feelings toward the leadership of the school. The administration, faculty, and staff cultivate and maintain a positive school climate for teaching and learning by being visible around the school, communicating effectively, and setting and modeling high expectations. Evidence showing support for teaching and learning includes advisory classes, implementation of professional learning communities (PLCs), and regular best teaching practice demonstrations in faculty meetings.

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?*

Rocky Mountain Junior High uses data-driven, research-based, and collaborative decision making to monitor progress in student achievement and instructional effectiveness. The evolution and current format of the advisory period, along with the ROAR program, are examples of effective, research-based, and collaborative decision making.

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?*

Rocky Mountain Junior High has a safe, efficient, and effective environment that aligns with the school mission and DRSLs. The administration has effectively focused the staff on and implemented the Responsible Citizenship DRSL through the ROAR program and advisory period.

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?*

Following Visiting Team discussions and observations, it is clear students, teachers, staff, and parents appreciate the school administration. When a large class was asked what they thought about the administration, they responded with spontaneous sounds of admiration and told of regular, sincere complements they receive from administrators and daily greetings upon entering the school in the morning. Students say the administrators, teachers, and staff members care about them personally. Teachers report that the administration sets and models high expectations and then empowers leadership groups such as department chairs, focus group leaders, and other committees to work and make recommendations to the administration and faculty at large.

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

Students at Rocky Mountain Junior High have a daily twenty-minute advisory period where teachers connect with students though character education lessons and academic monitoring, as well as assisting with individual matters. Several years ago, advisory was adjusted to have students remain with the same teacher throughout the junior high experience. During advisory, students have many opportunities to work one-on-one with their teacher. The ROAR program also provides administrators, teachers, and staff an opportunity to recognize students for positive behavior. Informally, students stated teachers were very approachable and made excellent advocates for student success.

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 Visiting Team observed that Rocky Mountain Junior High has implemented a comprehensive school improvement plan based on the self-study of the stakeholders. The action plan is clearly connected to the DRSLs and the needs of the school. The departmental analysis and focus groups were well thought out and honest about where the school is. One weakness they have found is the use of common assessments. The

faculty is committed to moving forward and using part of the late start time to collaboratively work on common assessments. The faculty, students, and parents are committed to continue the Responsible Citizenship DRSL. The Visiting Team recommends that the school continue with its action plan and analyze the data as it follows through with the plan.

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?*

After visiting with teachers and administrators, it is evident that professional development is well organized and continuous during Rocky Mountain Junior High's late-start days. Best practices are being taught and demonstrated by departments each month. Teachers are working to collaborate and implement common assessments. The administration is modeling expectations and following through with the mission of the school. Teachers know where their strengths are and the areas in which they need to improve. The staff and administration should be commended for their honest evaluation of professional development and the areas of growth for student achievement. The students at Rocky Mountain Junior High also see and feel a sense of dedication by their administration and teachers in their behalf.

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?*

Rocky Mountain Junior High's action plan addresses the needs of the school community and is structured to support the needs of the school and the students. The plan is centered on student achievement through learning and implementing the DRSLs. The plan has support from the stakeholders. It was observed the staff has been involved in creating the action plan, and is committed to seeing it through even if there are changes in leadership. The school has created a culture of continuous improvement, and the plan is the next step in moving forward. Through interviews it is evident that the staff members collaborate to help students achieve. The Visiting Team encourages them to move forward with their plans.

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

From interviews with teachers, students, and parents, it was obvious the school has created a culture where teachers and students can be honest about conditions and things that need to change. Teachers feel a sense of openness and feel comfortable in sharing their own weaknesses. The focus groups and departments have been honest in their analyses. It is commendable they are willing to reflect on their practices and the needs of the students.

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

The Visiting Team has observed that the school has moved forward with its action plan. Rocky Mountain Junior High has involved the stakeholders to make changes in the school's beliefs. The school has fully implemented the Responsible Citizen DRSL. Every teacher teaches character education once a week in advisory. Teachers, administrators, students, and parents know and understand the ROAR program. Rocky Mountain Junior High has been collecting and analyzing data in student achievement as well as tardies, absences, suspension, and discipline. The administration and teachers are to be commended for taking ownership and follow through of their action plan.

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

Rocky Mountain Junior High has made significant progress on the recommendations of the previous Visiting Team. They have implemented professional development and are collaborating as departments. The school community has institutionalized one DRSL. The staff understands the need for self-reflection and is committed to the process of continuous improvement. Technology in the school has improved and is used in the curriculum. Rocky Mountain Junior High is to be commended for the work it has been doing and its sense of ownership in the process.

CHAPTER 5: COMMUNITY BUILDING

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

The Visiting Team observed that Rocky Mountain Junior High has fostered a strong community feeling within the school and community. Students, parents, and staff members say that Rocky Mountain has the "feel" of a family. Respect for all members of the community is firmly entrenched as a value upheld throughout all stakeholder groups. Students feel they are safe and valued. Teachers and staff members are supported and respected. Parents are welcomed and feel comfortable when they enter the building or contact the school, and the administration is viewed with great respect and admiration by all members of the school community. This strong feeling of community and family is highly commendable.

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

Rocky Mountain Junior High is working to build professional learning communities in an effort to solidify collaboration throughout the curriculum. Intradepartmental collaboration was an integral part of the development of the action plan, as was the next step of interdepartmental collaboration, as the school identified common goals and the action steps needed to achieve those goals. The Visiting Team acknowledges that Rocky Mountain Junior High has a highly collaborative staff with a firm commitment to student achievement that not only includes academics, but character development as well.

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

The Visiting Team noted that the community was highly involved in the self-study process at Rocky Mountain Junior High. Each focus group was comprised of students, parents, and staff members. In visiting with the various groups, it was apparent to the Visiting Team that all members believed themselves to be highly valued members of the team who were allowed to give their individual input and be able to participate, without fear of judgment or that their voices would not be heard. All focus groups are highly invested in the desire to do what is best for students and to do that which would provided for academic success.

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

Rocky Mountain Junior High uses a wide variety of methods to gather data regarding various pieces of information associated with school improvement. The use of surveys, pre- and post-tests, attendance data, academic achievement data, state test data, My Access data, and various anecdotal data give Rocky Mountain staff a wide range of information that is useful in the assessment of school achievement. Use of the school newsletter, website, teacher blogs, and Weber School District's D-F-I notification and Portal allows for all stakeholders to be constantly informed of student progress, including school progress toward its goals.

CHAPTER 6: MAJOR COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Commendations:

- The Visiting Team highly commends the administration, teachers, staff, parents, and students for creating a positive, responsive, trusting culture centered on students at Rocky Mountain Junior High School. There is an exceptional feeling of support and loyalty which permeates the whole community. Principal Bill Grilz and Assistant Principal Karla Porter guide the school with purpose and shared leadership. They are

commended by the Visiting Team, parents, and students for their strong emphasis toward student life-long educational values and academia.

- The Visiting Team highly commends the teachers for their positive attitude and tremendous commitment to student achievement, both academic and life skills, including the ROAR program. Teachers at Rocky Mountain Junior High School "walk the walk" of dedicated educators. They have ownership in their teacher collaboration and data analysis. Furthermore, administrators and teachers use a wide variety of instructional strategies in the classroom, which motivates students and keeps them excited about learning. Hence, students are the beneficiaries in positive academic and life skills education.

- The Visiting Team highly commends the students of Rocky Mountain Junior High School for their dedication to their own education. They are responsible, respective, and positive toward each other and adults. They look to the future with enthusiasm, maturity and hope.

- The Visiting Team highly commends the whole Rocky Mountain Junior High School community for its tremendous emphasis on positive student achievement, including the school's professional learning communities and advisory period. The dedication and work for the self-study process by the administration and teachers is highly commendable. It is clear the teachers own this process. Because of the staff's ownership, teachers move forward, continually assessing and analyzing new instructional strategies and other information that raises the bar for student achievement. Hence, Rocky Mountain Junior High School is a progressive educational institution.

Recommendations:

- The Visiting Team recommends that Rocky Mountain Junior High School continue its work in PLCs, expanding them to include cross-curricular teams. This will aid in the transition to, and implementation of, the common core standards in language arts and mathematics. Research shows when teachers collaborate in PLCs using data, positive student achievement results. Data should drive instruction.

- The Visiting Team recommends that Rocky Mountain Junior High School continue with the advisory and ROAR programs, assessing and adjusting each as necessary based on student need. These two programs are foundational parts to the positive, family climate at the school, and show that the Responsible Citizenship DRSL has been truly institutionalized. Advisory and ROAR also provide opportunities for student recognition and assist students in taking responsibility for their own educational success and future.