

**The Report of the
Accreditation Visiting Team**

**Snow Canyon Middle School
1215 North Lava Flow Drive
St. George, Utah 84770**

January 20-21, 2010



**Utah State Office of Education
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Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-4200**

**THE REPORT OF THE
VISITING TEAM REVIEWING**

**Snow Canyon Middle School
1215 North Lava Flow Drive
St. George, Utah 84770**

January 20-21, 2010

UTAH STATE OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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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, January 20-21, 2010, 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 Snow Canyon Middle School is commended for the time and effort devoted to studying and evaluating the various facets of the total program and to preparing the materials used by the Visiting Team. The excellent leadership given by Principal Rusty Taylor is also commended.

The staff and administration are congratulated for their desire for excellence at Snow Canyon Middle 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 Snow Canyon Middle School.

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State Superintendent
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SNOW CANYON MIDDLE SCHOOL

ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF

School Administration

Rusty Taylor..... Principal
Cheri Stevenson Assistant Principal

Counseling

Ryan Stephens..... Counselor
Brooke Neumann Counselor
Christina Hacking Counselor

Support Staff

Patricia Parry..... Attendance Secretary
Jennifer Morgan Registrar
Tiffany Pendleton..... Finance Secretary

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Sandra Gonzalez	Jennie Ritchie	
Lolly Graff	Daniel Roden	

SNOW CANYON MIDDLE SCHOOL

MISSION STATEMENT

“Ensuring our students acquire academic and social skills for life-long success.”

VISION STATEMENT

If the students of Snow Canyon Middle School are to receive the best education possible, we must have a clear sense of the goals we are trying to accomplish, the characteristics of the school we hope to provide, and the contributions that the various stakeholders must make in order to transform our ideals into reality. The following vision statement is intended to provide the standards that we should strive to achieve and maintain. These standards should serve as both the blueprint for our improvement efforts and the benchmarks by which we will evaluate our progress.

Curriculum

In order to become an exemplary school, we must:

- Provide a clear, consistent curriculum that meets state learning objectives.
- Integrate life skills and character education into the lessons students learn.
- Constantly reassess curriculum to make sure it is relevant to our students and adapt the curriculum to meet the changing learning needs of our students.
- Provide additional, meaningful curriculum for those students who master academic content.

Culture

In order to become an exemplary school, we must:

- Create and maintain a school environment that is physically and emotionally safe for our students and staff.
- Treat all individuals with respect and consideration.
- Provide opportunities for high levels of participation in curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular programs.
- Recognize and celebrate individual efforts and achievements.
- Facilitate open communication between students, staff, administration, and district office.

Students

In order to become an exemplary school, students must:

- Accept responsibility for their learning, decisions, and actions.
- Become actively engaged in and give their best efforts to academic and co-curricular pursuits.
- Contribute to school and community service.

- Conduct themselves in a way that contributes to a safe and orderly atmosphere without infringing on the rights of others.
- Be considerate of other students, teachers, staff, visitors, etc.

Staff

In order to become an exemplary school, we must:

- Demonstrate our support of and commitment to the school's mission and vision.
- Have high expectations for student achievement and work individually and collaboratively to create conditions for student success.
- Collaborate with one another on a regular basis on curriculum, instruction individual students, and school improvement initiatives.
- Model the importance of life-long learning through our commitment to professional development.
- Provide a support system for all teachers as they seek to reach our school's vision.

Community

In order to become an exemplary school, the community must:

- Demonstrate support for the school mission and vision by taking an active role in the education of their children, monitoring their children's academic performance, and working with teachers to emphasize the importance of education.
- Participate in the life of the school by attending programs, volunteering service, and in the processes designed to enhance various aspects of the school.

COMMITMENT STATEMENTS

As the faculty of Snow Canyon Middle School we commit to:

1. Making student learning our focus.
2. Varying time and support for students, while maintaining learning goals.
3. Using researched-based "best practices" when working with our students.
4. Collaborating together to accomplish our mission.
5. Being prepared each day with meaningful lessons and activities.
6. Bettering ourselves as faculty members through on-going professional development.
7. Celebrating our students' successes and triumphs.
8. Providing a safe, nurturing environment for our learning community.
9. Maintaining open and frequent communication with parents and our community.

DESIRED RESULTS FOR STUDENT LEARNING (DRSLs)

1. *A Respectful and Responsible Citizen*
A respectful and responsible citizen takes personal responsibility for improving the quality of life for self and others and recognizes how individual choices affect self, family, and the community.
2. *An Effective Communicator*
An effective communicator is capable of using oral, written, and technological means to interact with others and to develop and communicate ideas based on core academic curriculum.
3. *Literate in Reading, Technology, and Mathematics*
A literate persona has gained and mastered basic knowledge and developed the individual learning skills that support continuous education
4. *A Problem Solver*
A problem solver is capable of utilizing a variety of critical, creative, and innovative strategies to solve complex problems.

Date of Visit: January 20-21, 2010

MEMBERS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Catherine Jensen, Sunset Ridge Middle School, Jordan School District, Visiting
Team Chairperson

Jeanette Bytendorp, Fairfield Junior High School, Davis School District

Marilee Eyre, Beaver High School, Beaver School District

Rodney Shaw, Fort Herriman Middle School, Jordan School District

VISITING TEAM REPORT
SNOW CANYON MIDDLE SCHOOL

CHAPTER 1: SCHOOL PROFILE

Snow Canyon Middle School opened in the fall of 1992 and is one of five middle schools in the Washington County School District. The school serves students from the town of Gunlock, the Shivwits Indian Reservation, and the cities of Ivins and Santa Clara, as well as several neighborhoods in St. George. Originally, the school included grades seven through nine. The grade configuration changed to eighth and ninth in the fall of 2002. Since the last accreditation visit, the administration of the school has changed, with Mr. Rusty Taylor as the current principal.

The school experienced unprecedented growth during 2003-2007. The demographics were affected by an influx of Hispanic students. The economic downturn of 2008 has had a dramatic impact on the resources available to the school.

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

The demographics of the school have changed since the last visit. The number of Hispanic students has doubled, from 51 to 104 students. The ESL program has increased proportionately. The school has also seen a recent increase in students receiving free and reduced-price lunch to 38 percent. That reflects an increase of eight percent.

CRT results are reported for the past four years. The highest percentage of students proficient on the science tests came in 2006, with a slight decline each year since. Math scores should not be compared due to changes in the tests and curriculum. Overall English scores have held steady at 85 percent proficient. As expected, groups showing an achievement gap include Hispanics, ELLs, and students with disabilities.

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

The reporting of student progress in the school's accreditation report is very limited. CRTs are reported without respect to grade level or specific subject. The Visiting Team requested additional data such as the AYP and UPASS reports. These were provided, but should be part of a continued effort to keep data in a systematic way.

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

The data provided in the profile section of the school's report was limited. The reporting in the focus group and departmental analysis sections of the self-study seem to accurately reflect the school's current strengths and limitations. Further inquiry by the team during the visit indicated the school staff is committed to reflective practice in order to increase student achievement. The Visiting Team suggests the school develop a method of systematically collecting and sharing multiple kinds of data.

Suggested Areas for Further Inquiry:

- The Visiting Team suggests the school develop a system of academic data collection, to include grade distributions and CRT data by grade and subject. This data should be readily available to individuals and teams of teachers as they work to increase student achievement.
- The Visiting Team suggests that the school collect and report school climate data such as discipline frequency, attendance, and mobility in addition to the ISQ survey.

**CHAPTER 2: NORTHWEST ASSOCIATION OF ACCREDITED SCHOOLS
(NAAS) TEACHING AND LEARNING STANDARDS**

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

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

Snow Canyon Middle 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 "Blazing trails of hope, opportunity, and achievement" to "Ensuring our students acquire academic and social skills for life-long success." The school's steering committee felt that the mission needed to be more descriptive. From the findings of the Visiting Team, it appears the mission statement was created with some collaboration, but lacked school-wide involvement. The steering committee wrote the statement and presented it to faculty for approval. The process of writing and establishing a vision statements and commitment 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. Snow Canyon Middle 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 and a direction focused upon student achievement. There is little evidence, however, that the student body understands or knows the DRSLs. Next steps are to develop rubrics, indicators or success, expected levels of performance and assessment, and tracking tools for at least two DRSLs.

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

Snow Canyon Middle School's mission statement emphasizes the development of academic and social skills to promote life-long learning. The DRSLs fit under this broad umbrella. The mission statement was created after the school decided to keep the DRSLs that it had in place. Snow Canyon Middle School's vision statements and commitment statements are aligned with the school's 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 little 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 Respectful and Responsible Citizens DRSL after the first visit in 2003. No rubric, indicators or measures have been made in assessing the chosen DRSL. With that said, the school has begun to implement a "Home Base" program that makes the students more responsible and accountable for the tracking of their own academic grades. This program began with the 2009-2010 school year, and has shown some effectiveness. The Visiting Team encourages further investigation and implementation of this program to better assess its effectiveness and to articulate what its overarching goal is. The school has also begun to complete community service projects such as "Drive-by Raking." Although these are great programs, the assessment of their effectiveness is missing.

- 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. Students could not articulate DRSLs or school goals, and DRSLs are not embedded into instruction across the curriculum. Citizenship is one DRSL that has begun to be institutionalized, as evidenced by numerous service projects and a prevalent attitude of generosity toward those in need.

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 found that Snow Canyon Middle School teachers work well together to ensure the curriculum is based on clearly defined standards. The teachers have the Life Skills posted on the walls of their classrooms, and review them with their students. Teachers work together as a staff to see that they follow the curriculum by having regular departments meetings. They meet together as a district and write “power standards” that focus on the Core Curriculum. Reviewing and aligning and creating curriculum maps as departments helps ensure that teachers are focusing on the curriculum.

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

The Snow Canyon Middle School faculty and staff have worked together to create special programs to help engage all students in inquiry, problem solving and higher-order thinking. They have organized a Zeroes Aren’t Permitted or ZAP program to help all students who are not passing their classes to be “zapped” into successfully completing all of their classes. Struggling students are referred to the ZAP program and must work throughout their lunch periods until their grades are brought up to passing. Peer tutoring is available to help struggling students, as is teacher help during the advisory periods and before and after school.

The Honors program helps provide rigorous and challenging classes for the gifted students. Honors classes are available in multiple subjects, including math, which is skill-based. Honors teachers focus on creating challenging curricula.

Regular education teachers focus on problem-solving skills, inquiry and higher-order thinking. However, some mainstream students may not be challenged to the extent of the gifted students because so many gifted students are taken out of the regular classrooms, causing a challenge for mainstream teachers. Discussions with students indicated a learning opportunity gap between the honors students and students in regular classes. Studies have shown that heterogeneous grouping is most beneficial to all levels of 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?*

Teachers meet as departments to see that their curricula focuses on the school’s DRSLs. Although all of the teachers may not be familiar with the language of desired results for student learning, they do focus on accomplishing school-wide goals. These goals are updated and analyzed periodically.

Teachers do not merely teach life skills; they have their students practice these skills and graph them in their advisory classes. Students write short- and long-term goals that focus on the life skills. The students analyze their goals weekly and write their own evaluations in their “Home Base Race” journals. Advisory teachers check these goals weekly. Notice that the title implies the school is like a family. Teachers post SWBATs (students will be able to) on their walls and update them often.

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

The Visiting Team found that SCMS teachers use a variety of assessments to drive the curriculum to help all students reach their goals. Reading teachers use STARS Reading assessments three times throughout the year to monitor student learning. Teachers have easy access to CRT scores and use data to make decisions. All students are required to graph their grades from every class every week. Students mark, read, and analyze their graphs regularly in their Home Base Race journals. Students can see their progress as they strive to reach their goals.

Instruction:

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

Snow Canyon Middle School teachers use a variety of instructional strategies to enhance student learning. Teachers are happy to share their instructional strategies to help each other use a variety of teaching strategies. The teachers are actively involved in “learning walks” in which they visit other teachers’ classes within their own school and witness best practices, then use them to vary their own teaching methods. Teachers use research-based, hands-on, and reinforced learning activities to enhance student 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 and staff has developed strategies for instruction to teach the DRSLs. Even though not all teachers are familiar with the DRSL jargon, they use a variety of teaching methods that focus on their school goals. This effort needs to become united and explicit across all content areas.

- 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?

Teachers meet weekly to focus on professional development to help meet their instructional needs. Many teachers use data to determine the needs of students. Various teachers are selected to present ideas to help in various areas of need. Teachers have worked together to create power questions and learning goals. Teachers are well informed as they work together often and attend various conferences.

- 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 are very proficient and knowledgeable in their content areas. Teachers must strive to meet the needs of the mainstream students who are not in honors classes to see that these students are adequately challenged. Honors teachers must work closely with mainstream teachers to see that all students receive the same learning expectations and opportunities.

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

Snow Canyon Middle School teachers integrate technology in their instruction. Several teachers use SMART Boards to help enhance student learning. The school has adequate computer labs and portable labs, so that every student has access to technology in every classroom. Curriculum maps are used to help teachers incorporate technology.

School-wide assessments could be used more to determine the needs for student learning.

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 Visiting Team found evidence of varied forms of assessments (e.g., student portfolios, oral presentation, student journals, research projects, group assignments, and common formative and summative assessments). These assessments address a variety of learning styles. After multiple classroom observations and conversations with stakeholders, the Visiting Team determined the staff and faculty need to develop school-wide assessments. Those assessments should include clear performance standards that measure student progress toward

the DRSLs. Some evidence was found that benchmark and common assessments are being used, but only in certain departments and at varying levels.

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

Although the Visiting Team observed many forms of assessment, school-wide assessments have yet to be determined. It was evident that the school uses a review of end-of-level assessment data at the beginning of the year, but no evidence was found that end-of-level data guided instruction and improvement goals. The Visiting Team found some departments that have begun this work, but recommends that each department explore and implement additional processes to fairly and equitably assess both school-wide and individual progress. While GPA can be an indicator of student progress, care should be taken when using this as a measure of student learning, as grades can be indicative of either mastery or simple work completion.

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

Departments are using online assessment programs that allow faculty members to compare and contrast student achievement. Parents and students can utilize the information gathered in these assessments to determine the students' individual needs. Evidence was shown that not enough is being done to evaluate assessments. The Visiting Team encourages Snow Canyon Middle School to continue in this path and use data more effectively to assess its success in meeting academic expectations.

- 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?*

Snow Canyon Middle School has adopted and begun to institutionalize the Professional Learning Communities, a process that requires collaboration. It was observed by the Visiting Team that the faculty uses projects, portfolios, essays, benchmarks, U-TIPS, peer assessments, self-assessments, rubrics, and selected response tests in assessing students. The leadership committee is encouraged to designate time for teachers to collaborate and develop a broad range of student assessment strategies.

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

In discussion, the principal acknowledged that this step has not been implemented since the previous accreditation visit. A full implementation is part of the current action plan.

CHAPTER 3: NAAS SUPPORT STANDARDS

Leadership and Organization:

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

The school leadership has fostered the philosophy of student learning as the constant, with time and support the variables. Efforts are being made to evaluate the effectiveness of instructional practice and provide professional development opportunities to improve practice. Next steps must include an effective system of data collection in order to make informed decisions. Curriculum should be shared collaboratively, with formative common assessments developed to inform 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 is committed to employing effective decision making that is data-driven by improving the collection, disaggregation and evaluation of academic data. The school leadership is honest in its assessment that more work needs to be done in this area. The school is working to move toward using “hard” data rather anecdotal evidence. The school is using the professional learning communities model to increase collaboration on student achievement and instructional effectiveness.

- 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 leadership is working to ensure effective management of school resources that supports school improvement efforts. These improvement efforts are reflective and thoughtful, and seem to be replacing somewhat superficial prior efforts. There is an understanding of the sustained efforts needed in order to produce positive results. The school goals and DRSLs are well defined and ready for system-wide implementation.

- 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 evolving to empower the entire school community in the decision-making process. The past few years have been spent working to develop a culture of collaboration that focuses on student learning, with the staff taking the responsibility to ensure learning. The school leadership is skillful in transforming the roles of others as the school moves toward shared and effective decision making. Collaboration is increasing through the professional learning communities. Next steps should include clearly defined roles for a school leadership team, including teacher leaders.

- 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?*

All students attend a 30-minute advisory class each day. Students track their own academic progress and set goals for the school week. Some students have been identified for subject specific advisory classes in order to get needed extra support. Some advisory classes are participating in the Home Base Race, which provides a competition for improvement with other advisory classes.

The school should consider using the advisory as the official tracking location for individual student acquisition of the desired results for student learning.

CHAPTER 4: NAAS SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT STANDARD

Culture of Continual Improvement:

- a) *To what extent has the school developed and implemented a comprehensive school improvement plan using Collaborating for Student Achievement, the Utah accreditation/school improvement process, that is reviewed and revised on an ongoing basis?*

Snow Canyon has implemented the PLC format into the school. At the time of accreditation, approximately 50 percent of teachers had attended a formal PLC conference for training, with a commitment from the administration to continue attendance until all staff members have had the opportunity to be trained at a conference. Snow Canyon is also actively working to have all teachers SIOP (ESL) certified. Currently they have a certified trainer on staff working with the Science Department, with plans to have all teachers trained.

- 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?*

Departments are continuing to work on curriculum mapping, common assessments, and identifying mastery items. The faculty has been given time to work together to create mapping, assessments, and sharing of best practices. The school has put in place a series of academic interventions to help those who have not achieved mastery items. The school leadership is committed to providing appropriate professional development in order to facilitate achievement of the school goals.

- 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?*

Evidence of follow-up on previous recommendations is recognized throughout the school. There has been significant improvement in the availability of technology, and a commitment to continue finding ways of increasing access. There has also been a shift in focus from Native American to Hispanic students as there has been a shift in population. The implementation of PLCs addressed the recommendation for a long-term professional development program for the staff.

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

Staff members have shown an exceptional willingness to take on PLCs and make the paradigm shift from teaching to student learning. Conditions have been well established that support productive change and continuous improvement. The current administration has facilitated a culture of “confronting the brutal facts of current reality” and then taking steps to achieve the school’s vision.

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

Goal #1: Develop an assessment system for the Scorpion Vision. Discussion on development was begun, but no specific rubric has been developed. *It should be noted that the school mascot has also been changed.*

Goal #2: Fully implement the SCMS writing standards in all content areas, and develop and implement valid, reliable reading strategies in all content areas. Some evidence was found by the Visiting Team that writing standards are being discussed with students. Most teachers have been instructed in the Six Traits of Writing model, which seems to be used in most classes.

Goal #3: Develop and incorporate the use of valid and reliable strategies to address the diverse learning needs of all students. The school is working on training and certifying all teachers in SIOP (ESL). They have also developed academic interventions for all students not achieving mastery of concepts.

Goal #4: Utilize classroom assessments and State Core assessments to improve instruction. The school has begun department curriculum mapping and common assessment in each area.

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

The school has made significant improvements in technology in classrooms and provided training for teachers on new technology, with a commitment to continue this effort. The school has also made significant work on common assessment within departments again, with continued work to be completed.

CHAPTER 5: COMMUNITY BUILDING

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

Snow Canyon has continued a very positive relationship with all stakeholder groups throughout the accreditation process. Members of the Community Council and PTA board expressed confidence and support of the direction the school has taken. They felt that the school has created a very positive and safe atmosphere for students. Parents felt that several changes over the last few years have improved relations with the community—for example, the closing of the campus at lunch time. This brought better relations with business partners in the area, with fewer problems with students during the lunch period.

Students also continue to express that one of the best aspects of the school is the efforts of the teachers and administration. They appreciate the increase in activities that include service both within the school and in the community. They also feel that the added clubs and activities give more students opportunities to participate.

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

In an effort to create a positive working relationship, the school policy of teachers e-mailing all parents a minimum of once per quarter to provide information on what is going on in classes has been much appreciated. Many teachers have expanded this to weekly e-mails and/or notification of upcoming assignment/events or issues in classes. Parents feel that this helps them be more aware of and comfortable with happenings within the school.

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

The school has several ongoing collaborative opportunities with the community, including Reality Store, partnerships with local businesses, and the partnership with Southwest Mental Health and Leisure Services. The School Resource Officer works with and helps students to understand and demonstrate the responsibilities that come with becoming a “respectful and responsible citizen.”

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

All results of school improvement are reported to the Community Council and PTA during regular monthly meetings. Results are also posted on school website, with e-mails and TCN to inform parents of completion and results.

CHAPTER 6: MAJOR COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Commendations:

- The Visiting Team commends the school leadership, especially the administration, for its positive impact on the school culture, and for facilitating the vision and direction toward what is best for each and every student.
- The Visiting Team commends the entire school staff for its commitment to the PLC model and the paradigm shift from teaching to learning, being willing to do whatever it takes to ensure student success.
- The Visiting Team commends the school community for creating an environment of caring and concern. Students know that staff members care about them and work hard to provide an education that will lead to a positive future.
- The Visiting Team commends the school for its efforts to involve all stakeholder groups in the school improvement process.

Recommendations:

- The Visiting Team recommends that the school take deliberate steps to institutionalize two DRSLs by the next visit. This should include development of rubrics and plans for explicit instruction as well as assessment tools. The rubrics

and assessments should define indicators of success and expected levels of performance for each DRSL.

- The Visiting Team recommends that the school develop a system to ensure social equity by opening doors of opportunity for each and every student. This would include creating a situation conducive to each student improving individual skills through differentiated instruction and individual choices. Deliberate steps should be taken to close the achievement gap.
- The Visiting Team recommends the development of a data collection system to drive the decisions of the school and inform instructional practice. Programs should be evaluated with data in order to determine their effectiveness.
- The Visiting Team recommends that the school commit to the ongoing process of school improvement with state accreditation as the umbrella for all other efforts. Care should be taken to set SMART goals (specific, measurable, attainable, results-based and time-bound). School Land Trust, CSIP and the school action plan should be aligned to reach common goals.