

**The Report of the
Accreditation Visiting Team**

**Stansbury Academy
8265 West 2700 South
Magna, Utah 84044**

April 23, 2012



**Utah State Office of Education
250 East 500 South
P.O. Box 144200
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Stansbury Academy
8265 West 2700 South
Magna, Utah 84044

April 23, 2012

UTAH STATE OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword	iii
Utah State Board of Education.....	iv
Stansbury Academy Administration and Staff.....	1
Stansbury Academy Mission Statement, Belief Statements, and DRSLs.....	2
Members of the Visiting Team	3
Visiting Team Report.....	4
Chapter 1: School Profile.....	4
Suggested Areas for Further Inquiry.....	4
Chapter 2: Northwest Accreditation Commission (Northwest)	
Teaching and Learning Standards.....	4
Mission, Beliefs and Desired Results for Student Learning (DRSLs).....	4
Curriculum	5
Instruction	6
Assessment.....	6
Chapter 3: Northwest Support Standards.....	7
Leadership and Organization	7
School Services	8
Facilities and Finances	8
Chapter 4: Northwest School Improvement Standard	9
Chapter 5: Community Building.....	10
Chapter 6: Major Commendations and Recommendations of the Visiting Team	11

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, April 23, 2012, 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 Stansbury Academy 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 Ron Crossman is also commended.

The staff and administration are congratulated for their desire for excellence at Stansbury Academy 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 Stansbury Academy.

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*Board of Regents Appointments

*** CMAC Representative Appointment

*****Charter School Representative Appointment

**UCAT Representative

****USBA Advisory Representative Appointment

VISTA ADOLESCENT TREATMENT CENTER

OWNERSHIP

UT-TEX, INC. dba Vista Adolescent Treatment Center Owner of Record
Mat Dixon Corporate Officer

STANSBURY ACADEMY

ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF

School Administration

Ron Crossman Principal

Counseling

Aaron Aldredge
Jason Capel
Bobbi Carter
Matt Checketts

Matt Dixon
Jeffery Kovnick, M.D.
Ryan Pepper
Steve Sawyer

Jason Seavey
Victor Tau'one

Support Staff

Eleanor Scholz

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Faculty

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Raquel Crossman
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Melissa Harvey

Ned Heitz
Swede Larson
Conrad Nebeker
Tracy Randall
Megan Vera

Caroline Wall
Brian Wilding
Dennis Wilson

STANSBURY ACADEMY

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Stansbury Academy is to educate our students to academic levels appropriate to their capabilities. We strive to prepare students for responsible citizenship and life-long learning. The growth and welfare of our students is our priority.

BELIEF STATEMENTS

- Vista should provide a safe and secure environment.
- Faculty, students and staff are all responsible for maintaining the facilities and equipment.
- All members of the school community should treat one another with respect.
- Vista should promote good citizenship and prepare students to be good citizens.
- Students should have a meaningful experience in school.
- Students need to take an active and prominent role in their learning.
- All school community groups should assist faculty in student growth and education.
- Communication between students, teachers and parents is essential for an effective school experience.
- Technology should be available to every student for hands-on research and study.
- Technology should facilitate the diverse educational experience of the student through varied teaching strategies.

DESIRED RESULTS FOR STUDENT LEARNING (DRSLs)

1. Communication and Collaboration
2. Thinking and Reasoning Skills
3. Character Development
4. Continuous Learning
5. Learning Climate

Date of visit: April 23, 2012

MEMBERS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Robert Stillwell, Northwest Accreditation Commission and USOE Accreditation
Consultant Visiting Team Chairperson

Jonathan Jones, Discovery Academy Principal Emeritus

VISITING TEAM REPORT

STANSBURY ACADEMY

CHAPTER 1: SCHOOL PROFILE

Stansbury Academy is the school for students living in Vista Adolescent Treatment Center in Magna, UT. The school is coed and serves 66 students on two campuses. The Draper facility was not visited. On the day of the visit, all teachers met with Visiting Team in Magna.

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

Mental health issues drive planning treatment for Stansbury students. In recent years the school has seen an increase in percentage of students needing special education services.

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

The school needs to prioritize professional development time for teachers to develop school-wide assessments and collect data on DRSL progress. The school also needs to prioritize which DRSL indicators will be used most often as measures of student success.

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

The self-study showed both areas of strength and areas that call for improvement.

Suggested Areas for Further Inquiry:

See the recommendations section below.

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 school's mission, beliefs and DRSLs have been revisited and are appropriate for the setting.

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

These elements support each other. The main purpose of the school is for the students to improve their mental health. The school has a supportive role in this endeavor.

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

Along with the five DRSLs there are several indicators. The indicators need to be prioritized because they don't all produce measureable results.

- 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 is purpose driven and values learning. The culture of the school is supportive of the hoped-for healing that the students will experience while in treatment.

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?*

There is clear evidence of alignment of the curriculum with the Utah Core and with the coming Common Core. The DRSLs incorporate many of the Life Skills domains.

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

There is a specific DRSL for Thinking and Reasoning Skills. Many treatment issues require introspection and critical thinking by students.

- 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 staff has played a significant role in working with the DRSLs. With five DRSLs, it is recommended that the indicators be prioritized so that clear evidence of student progress can be documented.

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

Teachers use their own classroom assessments as well as information from intake. All students receive specific assessments from teachers.

Instruction:

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

Teachers use a variety of strategies to help their students succeed. The quality of the classroom instruction is strong.

- 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 most institutionalized DRSL in the past six years has been Continuous Learning. Trusting relationships are built over time.

- 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?*

There is room to improve in professional development. The two biggest priorities are to train teachers in the anticipated influx of new technology in the classrooms and for collaboration on school-wide assessments.

- 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 teachers observed and interviewed were highly qualified and fully in command of their subject areas.

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

There are plans for new technology to be in place for next school year. This is a need that surfaced from focus groups and departmental analysis.

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?*

There is room to improve in the area of school-wide assessments. It has been recommended that the DRSL indicators be prioritized so that more data is collected on student progress.

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

Teachers are determining progress in their classes. This appears to be quite fair and transparent so that students understand the basis of their grades and credits.

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

The only data presented in the 2012 self-study was from surveys.

- 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?*

See the recommendations section below.

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

Currently there is not an organized agreement on a school-wide scoring tool to assess the DRSL.

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 of the school is positive and orderly. The principal has carefully selected the faculty to be skilled at engaging the students to be active learners.

- 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 is well run. There is room for improvement in assessing student progress on the DRSLs.

- c) *To what extent does the 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 environment is very safe and conducive to student learning. There are some technology needs that are still not in place, but there is a plan to allocate the resources in the near future.

- 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?*

Teachers have meaningful roles in aligning their curricula and in making classroom decisions regarding student learning. One of the recommendations from the Visiting Team is for the school to provide professional development for teachers to collaborate on school-wide assessments.

- 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?*

Each Stansbury student receives 18 hours of individual and group therapy on a weekly basis. In addition to this, the class sizes are small enough that each teacher knows each student as well.

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 has developed a school improvement plan that focuses on the results of student surveys. The surveys were accomplished in preparation for the self-study for accreditation. The focus is on meeting the students' needs and desires for greater emphasis on earning credits toward graduation while enrolled in Stansbury Academy. The goal is to reinforce the stated DRSLs, particularly in relation to continuous learning and learning climate. The action plan includes statement of the issues, the goal for achievement, and specific issues involved in implementation. The plan was developed collaboratively by the faculty and administration.

- 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's plan is to collaboratively deal with the specific issues revealed by the surveys and faculty input. Professional development through in-service will be a necessity in order to further define the course of action in the academic departments, the collection of relevant data, and implementation of specific actions. Specifically, a collaborative effort will be necessary in working with students so as to increase their progress in earning credit, in providing individualized help with coursework, and in the development and use of appropriate technology in the classroom.

- 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 school action plan includes a commitment to more frequent surveys of students and student attitudes in order to ascertain effectiveness of actions taken to improve teaching strategies. Also, the plan is to directly involve the faculty in the choice of technology hardware and software as applicable to specific disciplines, all in relation to "best use" practices. The plan includes addressing specific student needs that are deemed to hinder student progress in completing courses and earning credit, and to target these needs (i.e., reading skills, use of media, increasing individualized help, and using diverse teaching methods for effectiveness).

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

The school provides both time and funding for supporting change and continuous funding the scheduling of in-service for professional development and collaboration in strategies. The school has specifically budgeted for technology development. The school administration is directly involved and fully supportive of accomplishing effective, productive change.

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

The current report does not make reference to the original action plan as presented at the last full visit. The emphasis of the current self-study is focused entirely on the action plan for the next accreditation period and is, in fact, a six-year action plan.

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

The school's report indicates that since the last full visit the focus has been on facing and dealing with two significant issues. First of all, a fully qualified special education teacher has been hired to work with the increasing number special education students enrolling in Stansbury Academy. Secondly, adjustments have been made to properly accommodate a changing population due, apparently, to the nation's economic downturn, resulting in more difficult students to deal with both therapeutically and academically.

CHAPTER 5: COMMUNITY BUILDING

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

There is a collegial atmosphere among the faculty. Regardless of the subject that is being taught in a classroom, another teacher is also present and available for providing individual help as needed. This often results in the "other" teacher being of a different discipline (e.g., an English teacher present during a social studies class). In addition, the teachers are part of the treatment team, working with the therapists in dealing with each student individually. The departmental analyses regarding DRSLs indicate a collaborative effort where applicable; however, some "departments" consist of a single teacher. Faculty, therapists, and residential staff work together at all times, in and out of class.

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

The primary means by which the school operates as a community and a collaborative network is the weekly meeting of the treatment team. The school has equal input

regarding the determination of a student's level (the level system measures student progress in the over-all therapeutic program of the institution, and determines student privileges and activities). The point system is easily adaptable to a student's attitude and conduct within the classroom and is a clear view of student progress; thus, all involved with the student have in-put and are involved in direct communication and discussion.

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

The entire faculty, administration, and student body were involved in the self-study process. Because the students all come from out of state, there were no parent focus groups. The school report is the culmination of input from all parts of the school community that were directly involved.

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

The school report has been made available to all members of the faculty and staff. Students are not directly involved in the dissemination of the report due to the nature of the population of a residential treatment center. However, students who were interviewed gave evidence of awareness of some of the main concerns or issues involved in the self-study.

CHAPTER 6: MAJOR COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Commendations:

- The Visiting Team commends Stansbury Academy for the quality of the teaching staff.
- The Visiting Team commends Stansbury Academy for the well designed and well maintained facilities which promote safety and learning.
- The Visiting Team commends Stansbury Academy for the high level of individualization of student learning, and for the supports for student success.

Recommendations:

- The Visiting Team recommends that Stansbury Academy provide professional development for teachers to collaborate in developing a broad range of student assessment strategies.

- The Visiting Team recommends that Stansbury Academy increase technology in the classrooms and provide teachers training in its effective use.
- The Visiting Team recommends that Stansbury Academy prioritize its DRSLs and DRSL indicators. The school should focus on its priorities and collect and report data showing student progress on the DRSLs.