

**The Report of the
Accreditation Visiting Team**

**Treasure Mountain International
School
2530 Kearns Blvd
Park City, Utah 84060**

January 26-27, 2009



**Utah State Office of Education
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**THE REPORT OF THE
VISITING TEAM REVIEWING**

Treasure Mountain International School

**2530 Kearns Blvd.
Park City, UT 84060**

January 26-27, 2009

UTAH STATE OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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Salt Lake City, Utah

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FOREWORD

The major purpose of the accreditation process is to stimulate school growth and improvement so as to increase 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. It is a three-phased 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 26-27, 2009, 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 Treasure Mountain International 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 Robert O'Connor is also commended.

The staff and administration are congratulated for their desire for excellence at Treasure Mountain International School, and also for the professional attitude of all members of the group, which made it possible for them to see areas of weakness and strength and to suggest procedures for bringing about 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 even more 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 Treasure Mountain International School.

Patti Harrington, Ed.D.
State Superintendent
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TREASURE MOUNTAIN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

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Kevin McIntosh Assistant Principal

Counseling

Diane Cashel Counselor
Mary Klismith..... Counselor

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TREASURE MOUNTAIN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

MISSION STATEMENT

The International Baccalaureate Organization aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect.

To this end the IBO works with schools, governments and international organizations to develop challenging programmes [sic] of international education and rigorous assessment.

These programmes [sic] encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right.

BELIEF STATEMENTS

- Learning occurs when students connect pieces of curricular information. It is in the deductions during enquiry, analysis, and reflection that learning takes place.
- Students learn best when actively engaged in problem solving that is meaningful to them. In planning strategies comes motivation, curiosity, and intellectual satisfaction.
- Equity is achieved when all students have equal access to learning opportunities and are held to the same exacting standards.

DESIRED RESULTS FOR STUDENT LEARNING (DRSLs)

Treasure Mountain learners strive to be:

Inquirers They develop their natural curiosity. They acquire the skills necessary to conduct inquiry and research and show independence in learning. They actively enjoy learning and this love of learning will be sustained throughout their lives.

Knowledgeable They explore concepts, ideas and issues that have local and global significance. In so doing, they acquire in-depth knowledge and develop understanding across a broad and balanced range of disciplines.

Thinkers They exercise initiative in applying thinking skills critically and creatively to recognize and approach complex problems, and make reasoned, ethical decisions.

Communicators They understand and express ideas and information confidently and creatively in more than one language and in a variety of modes of communication. They work effectively and willingly in collaboration with others.

Principled They act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness, justice and respect for the dignity of the individual, groups and communities. They take responsibility for their own actions and the consequences that accompany them.

Open-minded They understand and appreciate their own cultures and personal histories, and are open to the perspectives, values and traditions of other individuals and communities. They are accustomed to seeking and evaluating a range of points of view, and are willing to grow from the experience.

Caring They show empathy, compassion and respect towards the needs and feelings of others. They have a personal commitment to service, and act to make a positive difference to the lives of others and to the environment.

Risk-takers They approach unfamiliar situations and uncertainty with courage and forethought, and have the independence of spirit to explore new roles, ideas and strategies. They are brave and articulate in defending their beliefs.

Balanced They understand the importance of intellectual, physical and emotional balance to achieve personal well-being for themselves and others.

Reflective They give thoughtful consideration to their own learning and experience. They are able to assess and understand their strengths and limitations in order to support their learning and personal development.

Date of visit:

January 26-27, 2009

MEMBERS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Craig Jessop, Rocky Mountain Junior High, Weber School District, Visiting Team
Chairperson

Randy Tree, Sunset Ridge Middle School, Jordan School District

Tim Thompson, Mapleton Junior High, Nebo School District

Aaron Wolthuis, Snowcrest Junior High, Weber School District

VISITING TEAM REPORT

TREASURE MOUNTAIN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

CHAPTER 1: SCHOOL PROFILE

Treasure Mountain International School is located in Park City, a former mining town and now world-famous ski resort, located 20 minutes east of Salt Lake City. The economy of the town is supported by tourism and the patrons are economically diverse, from the very rich to the unskilled laborer.

The school opened in 1982 as a grade 4-8 middle school. The school hosted various grade configurations (including a long period on grades 6-8) until 2005, when it adopted the current grade configuration of grades 8-9.

In 2002, Treasure Mountain offered its first year of a Middle Years Program, as outlined by International Baccalaureate (IB). The initial group consisted of 60 students and three core teachers. The success of the school-within-a-school program led to the realization that this arrangement would be appropriate for the entire school.

The IB program provides a cohesive vision of Park City School District's educational direction. The program's emphasis is on international perspectives as they relate to subject areas. There is evidence of synergistic change as teachers rethink learning activities with an IB perspective and promote student-directed learning.

The school reports that student perspectives are also changing with the introduction of the IB program; students are now offering opinions that are better informed and acknowledging different points of view.

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

Treasure Mountain International School has become affiliated with the International Baccalaureate World School organization. The move to becoming an IB school was mandated by the Park City School Board about seven years ago. This form of school organization places a major emphasis on teaching students to think, analyze, compare, and communicate. Students spend a substantial amount of time in small group and classroom discussion. Writing is also an essential element in the focus on communication. In addition, students are exposed to—and learn to consider themselves part of—the culture of an international community. In the spring of 2008, Treasure Mountain became the first fully approved International Baccalaureate Middle Years School in Utah.

The school has chosen to use the mission statement of the International Baccalaureate for its mission statement. The school's beliefs are based upon the beliefs of the IB organization, and it uses the IB learner profile for its DRSLs.

The profile emphasized ISQ status report, current testing, and AYP reports.

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

The Visiting Team noted that Treasure Mountain International School has made great strides toward aligning itself with the International Baccalaureate Program. However, as noted in Chapter 6 below, the mission statement, belief statements, and DRSLs need to branch out to become individualized to the school in order for the school to make progress toward its own needs, goals, and philosophy.

The profile also needs to include a look at what is being done to aid students who fall behind, and to disaggregate the data to discover which of the school's diverse range of students are most prone to struggle in school.

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

Much of the school's self-study is based on test results and surveys. As the school defines its own beliefs and DRSLs, it will become increasingly easier to address the strengths and limitations of the school and school community. The current self-study clearly portrays the school's strengths, although even more information could be included on how well the students are progressing in their critical thinking skills and development of an international perspective; however, the school's limitations and how the faculty members are dealing with students who are not progressing as rapidly as their peers needs more emphasis.

Suggested Areas for Further Inquiry:

- Investigate who is falling behind, why they are falling behind, and what is being done to level the playing field for these students.
- Include a focus on mission, beliefs, and DRSLs that are specific to Treasure Mountain, while keeping the overall philosophy that has guided the school to incredible results.

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?*

Treasure Mountain International School has spent seven years working to implement the International Baccalaureate (IB) program. The IB program started as a school-within-a-school and had 60 students during its first year. Treasure Mountain has since changed to a whole-school model, and has recently gone through the authorization process for the entire school. The school has utilized the mission, beliefs, and learner profile from the IB program as its mission, beliefs, and DRSLs for the accreditation process. The Visiting Team has made recommendations for greater personalization of these elements to the school (see Chapter 6 below).

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

The Visiting Team found that Treasure Mountain International School has a culture in which there is a definite sense of a mission, beliefs, and DRSLs. In the self-study, the school's own mission, beliefs, and DRSLs were not clear; rather, the self-study used general mission, beliefs and indicators from the IB program. (For recommendations regarding the school's mission, beliefs, and DRSLs, see Chapter 6 below.)

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

Treasure Mountain International School uses the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Program (IBMYP) learner profile as indicators for assessing the progress made by students. The faculty, staff, students, and parents use the same indicators to track progress of their students. The indicators are Inquirers, Knowledgeable, Thinkers, Communicators, Principled, Open-minded, Caring, Risk-takers, Balanced, and Reflective. It is apparent that Treasure Mountain International School uses these indicators with a substantial measure of success across all disciplines and throughout the school.

- 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 apparent that the IB program is used to direct the policies and decisions of Treasure Mountain International School; it is strongly indoctrinated in the culture of the school. All stakeholders in the school have a shared vision regarding the IB

program, and therefore the school is finding great success in the program. As the school individualizes its mission, beliefs, and DRSLs (see Chapter 6 below), these will become more apparent in the school culture.

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?*

Treasure Mountain International School has been engaged in a school-wide effort to become recognized in the IB Middle Years Program. As far as the Visiting Team was able to determine, every department has made an exhaustive effort to see that the curriculum at Treasure Mountain International School aligns with both the Utah State Core Curriculum and the IB curriculum. The school has defined are called “red Mondays.” Time is set aside each red Monday for collaboration in and between departments during their conference periods. This provides opportunities for staff members to address curriculum concerns. The district provides at least four curriculum days each year that teachers can use to make sure the core standards of each subject area curriculum are reviewed, addressed, and taught. The attributes defined in the Utah Life Skills are addressed and covered rather nicely by the IB learner profile. Though the exact terms defined in the Utah Life Skills are not addressed, the IB’s 10 learning profiles more than cover the ideas set forth in the Life Skills document. The school has spent significant time and resources in aligning the teaching and thinking of each teacher with these profiles. The IB learner profile also serves as the school’s desired results for student learning; therefore the curriculum, by its nature, supports these.

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

The Visiting Team witnessed a wide variety of teaching styles being incorporated in the implementation of the curriculum with the aim of reaching and teaching all students. Activities observed were very hands-on, and students were encouraged to participate in small group and classroom discussions as well as discovery activities. Students were given support through the Special Education Department, instructional support classes, study skills classes, and/or tutoring to ensure they were exposed to the core concepts along with the higher-achieving 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 faculty has worked collaboratively to address and implement the IB learner profile, which also serves as the school’s DRSLs. As noted above, “red Mondays” are a time for teachers to collaborate in inter- and intradepartmental planning that will benefit the students. However, the Visiting Team felt the IB learner profile statements

were too broad and too vague to allow for a focused effort that will take the school to the next level.

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

Through observation and interviews, the Visiting Team found evidence that teachers not only access to, but had made adjustments in curriculum and teaching methods to address known deficiencies.

Instruction:

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

Treasure Mountain's teachers use a variety of teaching styles. The school has adopted the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Program (IBMYP) Desired Indicators of Student Learning. Using the learner profile, teachers employ a variety of teaching styles to help students become inquirers, knowledgeable, thinkers, communicators, principled, open-minded, caring, risk-takers, balanced, and reflective. The Visiting Team visited the classrooms and observed teachers changing and adapting lessons to address the IBMYP learner profiles. Treasure Mountain International School also created a survey to help gather further information that the school can use to verify that teachers are using a variety of instructional strategies.

- 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 Visiting Team found that the school and staff have developed strategies for teaching the IBMYP Desired Indicators of Student Learning. The Visiting Team felt that the faculty was teaching to what the school has defined as its DRSLs, and that faculty members have had a substantial measure of success in ingraining their current DRSLs into the students' lives. It is the recommendation of the Visiting Team that the school and staff more closely define their DRSLs, and limit the number of DRSLs to three to four for the whole school.

- 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 collaboration is an important factor in professional development at Treasure Mountain International School. Treasure Mountain International School uses every second Wednesday for collaboration. Teachers use their prep time on that day to work together for improved student learning. The Visiting Team also found that there was continued professional development on the

IBMYP. The school has a staff member who spends 50 percent of her time assisting in the implementation and training of staff members on the IBMYP. Park City School District has scheduled four days a year for teacher training.

- 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 Visiting Team found that Treasure Mountain International School teachers are very proficient in their content areas. As team members discussed instructional approaches and reflection with the teachers, they found that the teachers are utilizing many approaches to reach all students. The Visiting Team determined that there is a culture of self-reflection among the teachers and staff at Treasure Mountain International School. Teachers use a curriculum map for their classes, and reflect on what they are teaching to be sure it aligns with both the core and the curriculum map.

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

Teachers at Treasure Mountain International School use technology in their lessons through PowerPoint presentations, blogs, and other online activities. Teachers also use blogs, Power School, and e-mail to help students succeed at school. Treasure Mountain International School has all of its teachers use an online program for mapping their curricula. This allows teachers to access information on what other teachers are doing in their classes, so that cross-curricular activities can be planned.

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 clear evidence that school-wide, departmental, and individual classroom assessments are criterion based. Led by the English Department, the staff has developed rubrics based on the Six Traits of Writing that are used in assessing writing assignments across all content areas. Individual classroom teachers are also autonomous in developing their own assessments in order to assess individual classroom goals. In addition to formal assessments such as tests, quizzes, and group presentations, the Visiting Team also observed teachers informally checking for student understanding as students participated in classroom discussions.

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

On major projects, including the MYP ninth grade project, all students are evaluated

according to criteria developed by the International Baccalaureate Organization. Teachers have also developed modified writing rubrics that are used in assessing ELL and special education student writing.

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

In addition to reviewing student test scores, the school has also looked for trends in the types of classes that their exiting students are taking at Park City High School as evidence that students are meeting the school's DRSLs. The Visiting Team recommends that the school administration and faculty continue to review assessment data in determining effectiveness of programs and teacher 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?*

It is evident that school administration supports teachers by offering time for collaboration and professional development. Teachers have used their "red Monday" and "white Wednesday" collaboration times to develop writing rubrics and review the International Baccalaureate criteria according to which major projects and assignments are graded.

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

The Visiting Team observed that faculty is in agreement regarding the use of school-wide assessment rubrics. The school has also found success and greater objectivity in using multiple teachers in the assessment of individual major projects, including the MYP ninth grade project. The Visiting Team recommends that some collaboration time be used to assist in training content area teachers who are unfamiliar or uncomfortable with the assessment of student writing.

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 provides instructional leadership not only by providing in-service on a regular basis, but by becoming, themselves, participants in the educational process. Every second Monday is designated as in-service and collaboration time.

Four times per year, the Park City School District provides instruction to all teachers. Much of the training done at the school level is based around the International Baccalaureate program in which Treasure Mountain International School is deeply involved. Each year, at least eight teachers are trained intensively in IB strategies.

- 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 leadership of Treasure Mountain International School uses standardized tests; surveys; input from the community, district leadership, and teachers; and student projects that are part of the IB program to guide decision making in the school. Teachers take part in much best practices training as they become fully involved in IB education. Formal collaboration among departments takes place twice a month. Teachers complete a curriculum map to aid in cross-curricular classroom activities.

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

The Visiting Team noted that school leadership is very supportive of what is happening in classes. School leaders spend time in classrooms and know the challenges teachers face, as well as what is being taught and the methods used to teach the curriculum. Teachers feel that administrators are involved in the school and in making the school safe, and that, if there is any possible way, the school leaders will provide the resources needed for students and classrooms.

- 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 IB conception of education tends to drive many of the school's programs and initiatives. The school leadership is supportive of departments, teachers, and parent organizations as these groups work to improve educational opportunities for their students. The leadership does a good job of implementing IB concepts and training, and of making sure that interested parties such as parents, community members and teachers have a voice in the process.

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

Treasure Mountain International School has an advisory period built into the schedule each day. This is a short period of time in which students can communicate with their advisory teachers. In addition, the Middle Years Program has a special certificate built into the school

program. Each student who seeks to earn the certificate will work and coordinate his or her efforts with an adult advisor at the school. Community service is expected, as well as an adequate GPA. The certificate program is not pursued by all of the students, but those who do pursue it have additional personal contact with an adult in the school.

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?*

The Visiting Team observed that Treasure Mountain International School has implemented a school improvement plan. The plan is clearly outlined, with actions, responsibilities, timelines, accountability, and resources allocated. The goals of this plan align with the needs of Treasure Mountain International School, as well as the requirements of IB.

- 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 Visiting Team observed that Treasure Mountain International School has devoted significant resources to staff development. A wide variety of teachers have access to training and professional development through conferences and workshops locally, nationally, and internationally. Treasure Mountain International School has committed resources to training staff members in IB, as well as district-mandated ESL training. Treasure Mountain International School has a fully functioning instructional coach program, as well as other programs to assist new teachers.

- 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?*

Through observations and interviews, the Visiting Team found significant buy-in and commitment to the school-wide action plan. Funds have been provided and time made available—through the use of “red Mondays” and “white Wednesdays,” as well as other times—to accomplish these actions.

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

The Visiting Team has observed that Treasure Mountain International School has implemented a comprehensive school improvement plan based on their needs and the requirements of the IB program.

The departmental and focus group analyses were well thought out and honest about both strengths and weaknesses. The faculty is strongly committed to both the student achievement and IB aspects of the school's action plan.

CHAPTER 5: COMMUNITY BUILDING

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

There is a strong feeling of pride and tradition at Treasure Mountain International School. The Visiting Team observed a sense of community cultivated by administration, faculty, students, parents, and community partners. The school administration and teachers expressed gratitude to the Park City community for its continual support in helping the students of Treasure Mountain International School reach their goals. The Park City community has also been very generous in its financial support of Treasure Mountain International School and its various programs.

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

The students at Treasure Mountain International School assist the Park City community through volunteer service as they work toward their MYP certificates. Discussions with faculty members indicated that community partners are also very supportive of Treasure Mountain International School programs and events.

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

Community members were invited to, and participated in, school focus groups. During these focus groups, members discussed the school's strengths, challenges, and future goals and direction.

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

The school has had success in utilizing the Community Council to communicate the goals and express the needs of the students at Treasure Mountain International School. The administration and faculty use data to drive decisions regarding the success of

programs. Treasure Mountain International School is also fortunate in having a fully functioning and supportive parent-teacher organization that assists in supporting the goals and mission of Treasure Mountain International School.

CHAPTER 6: MAJOR COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Commendations:

- The Visiting Team commends the leadership and faculty of Treasure Mountain International School for their efforts in developing students that are thinkers and communicators. The Visiting Team observed students participating in in-class discussions with insight and articulation beyond those typically observed in students of this age.
- The Visiting Team commends the leadership and faculty of Treasure Mountain International School for their vision in implementing the IB program, and for realizing that this program would benefit all of the students in the school and not just a select few.
- The Visiting Team commends the leadership and faculty of Treasure Mountain International School for preparing the students at Treasure Mountain International School to be aware that they are part of a global society.
- The Visiting Team commends the faculty of Treasure Mountain International School for creating a culture in which students feel that they are cared for and their teachers value their success.

Recommendations:

- The Visiting Team recommends more fully utilizing the Student Council and other students to assist in promoting student activities, school accreditation, and other appropriate aspects of education.
- The Visiting Team recommends greater personalization of the school's mission statement to reflect the needs, personality, and culture of the Park City community.
- The Visiting Team recommends development of belief statements that reflect the mission statement and the innermost desires and goals of the school community for its students.

- The Visiting Team recommends the development of specific DRSLs and indicators that are aligned with the school's mission and belief statements. These DRSLs should specify what Treasure Mountain International School values as the most important skills and lessons all students will take with them when they leave the school.