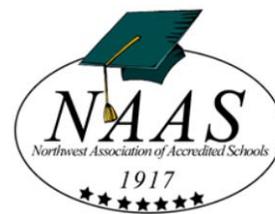


**The Report of the  
Accreditation Visiting Team**

**Uintah High School  
1880 West 500 North  
Vernal, Utah 84078**

**October 14-15, 2009**



**Utah State Office of Education  
250 East 500 South  
P.O. Box 144200  
Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-4200**

**THE REPORT OF THE  
VISITING TEAM REVIEWING**

**Uintah High School  
1880 West 500 North  
Vernal, Utah 84078**

**October 14-15, 2009**

**UTAH STATE OFFICE OF EDUCATION**

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State Superintendent of Public Instruction**

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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, October 14-15, 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 Uintah High 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 Julie Wilde is also commended.

The staff and administration are congratulated for their desire for excellence at Uintah High 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 Uintah High School.

Larry K. Shumway, Ed.D.  
State Superintendent  
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7/22/2009

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John Anderson ..... Principal, Naples Elementary  
Deborah Chatham ..... Principal, Vernal Middle School  
Kent Bunderson ..... Principal, Vernal Jr. High  
Julie Wilde ..... Principal, Uintah High

**UINTAH HIGH SCHOOL**

**ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF**

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Julie Wilde ..... Principal  
Sharon Shipton..... Assistant Principal  
TBA..... Assistant Principal

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Connie Shumway ..... Counselor  
Rob Willardson ..... Counselor

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Sheri Allen	Rick Green	Diane McLean
Karlie Allred	Sonja Green	Travis Mold
Susan Anthon	Lesha Hacking	Shellie Morey
Julie Barr	Donda Harrison	Sherie Norton
Deb Basham	Karinda Jackson	Danelle O’Bagy
Connie Blunt	Loretta Karren	Francene Peterson
Mary Lou Boren	Daren Kelly	Betty Potter
Gloria Buist	Debbie Lamoreaux	Susan Ross
Cody Calder	Karen Lawson	Jana Seright
Rob DeCol	Mary Mathews	Pam Tapoof
Debbie Fletcher	Patricia McCourt	Kelle Trogstad
Gail Frost	Mechelle McClendan	Buffy Woody

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Linda Bartel	Gary Galley	Kay Lynn Holmes
Joleen Cottrell	Brian Gibson	Rebekah Jones
Tom Elder	Lori Gillman	Linda Kurtenbach
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Shannon Flatt	Mark Grammer	Tahrah LaFramboise
Marsha Forsgren	Alene Gray	Gil Limb

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Chris Manwaring  
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Keith McMullin  
Aaron Merryweather  
Linda Mock  
Kenny Mohar  
Mary Moulton

Gary Muir  
Dawn O'Hearn  
Wade Olsen  
Peggy Patton  
Betty Ann Peterson  
Myrna Philipp  
Chris Piner  
Kristy Putnam

Jared Scow  
Ingrid Smith  
Carolyn Squires  
Renee Steele  
Gregg Stensgard  
David Wilson  
Sarah Young

## **UINTAH HIGH SCHOOL**

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

**“Helping students prepare themselves for success in a changing world.”**

### **BELIEF STATEMENTS**

#### **Uintah High School believes:**

- Every student can learn, achieve and succeed
- Students can become life-long learners and productive citizens
- Each of us should feel safe and respected
- Clear goals, high expectations and accountability for all
- Parent and community involvement is critical to student success
- Every student should develop a healthy lifestyle and be responsible for his/her actions

### **DESIRED RESULTS FOR STUDENT LEARNING (DRSLs)**

*Students at Uintah Senior High School strive to become:*

#### **CRITICAL THINKERS who will**

- Read, write, speak and listen competently and critically
- Adapt to changing conditions
- Analyze and critically evaluate information sources
- Access/apply technology to solve problems and make decisions
- Use a multiple of strategies and application of academic knowledge to solve a variety of problems

#### **LIFE-LONG LEARNERS who will**

- Think in international and historical contexts
- Assess personal efforts
- Work in groups as well as individually

#### **EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATORS who will**

- Read, write, speak and listen competently and critically
- Express themselves in a variety of media which could include art, music, dance, theater, foreign languages and/or public speaking

Date of visit: October 14-15, 2009

## **MEMBERS OF THE VISITING TEAM**

Dr. Nancy L. Jadallah, Eisenhower Junior High School, Granite School District, Visiting  
Team Chairperson

Michele Kersey, Roy High School, Weber School District, Member

Glenn Westbroek, Orem Junior High School, Alpine School District, Member

Willa Jamieson, Eisenhower Junior High School, Granite School District, Member

## VISITING TEAM REPORT

### UINTAH HIGH SCHOOL

#### CHAPTER 1: SCHOOL PROFILE

Uintah High School is located in the beautiful Uintah Basin in eastern Utah, near the Dinosaur National Monument, Flaming Gorge National Recreation Area, and the Uintah Mountains. The community is primarily dependent upon the oil and gas industry, mining, and agriculture. The area has recently experienced a downturn in its economy due to the low price of crude oil. Many families are struggling with lack of work and resources. The student population is over 90 percent Caucasian, but there has been an increase in the number of minority students in the school in recent years. The percentage of students below the poverty line is around 14 percent. The percentage of students being served in special education is about 11 percent.

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

The school made AYP for the last three years. Data was not given regarding AYP for the 2009 school year.

The data in the accreditation report indicated that the grade distribution is positively skewed, with students earning over 4,800 A's in 2009 and only 4,200 or so students earning C's, D's, and F's. According to the principal, grades in this school are not indicative of the students' learning as this data would indicate. The data also shows number of students taking the AP tests and the ACT tests, but does not summarize the students' scores on the tests that would indicate levels of student learning. In 2006, there were 300 fewer students taking AP classes. The administration indicated a "staff" problem and a willingness to encourage additional class offerings of AP classes now. Students also indicated a desire to take additional AP classes.

The school has a 30 percent dropout rate for students. This is monumental and a concern for the school, the district, the school PTO, and the SCC. Some students do very well and are well connected to the school. Many students take advantage of the concurrent classes offered at school or at the Uintah Basin Technical College (UBTC). Approximately 95 percent of the students who took concurrent courses received college credit (2008). These classes are taught by Uintah High School as well as UBTC staff members. Other students simply drop out.

There are subpopulations of students who are either unmotivated to learn and complete their high school program (due in part to the local culture, which often has lucrative jobs even for students) or who just do not learn for other reasons. Of students who retake the

UBSCT in February, for example, approximately 80 percent fail the test. Also, students served with accommodations typically have a 90 percent failure rate on the same test. In the years 2006-2008, a very high percentage (80-95 percent) of American Indian students failed.

The school's Algebra I CRT scores are very low in comparison with district and state scores (46 percent for the school in comparison to 84 percent for the district and 70 percent for the state in 2008).

The Language Arts CRT scores (2008) are solid and above the yearly bar set for AYP, showing improvement over the last few years. This is most likely due to the increased focus on and attention paid to literacy at the school.

In 2008, 55 percent of students taking the Chemistry CRT exam were non-proficient; for girls, the rate was 61 percent non-proficient.

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

The data was varied, but there were holes in the data. The second-year visit took place in October 2009, but the last data included was from 2007 or, in some cases, 2008. There was little if any 2009 data. Data should be current and updated.

The surveys given to stakeholders were not included in the data, so it was hard to ascertain the areas of strength or weakness as the team did not have a copy of the survey questions. The parental voice was also hard to evaluate, as the parents were not surveyed. When we met with the "parent" group, only one parent present had been involved in the accreditation process, and this person had only attended one meeting. Consequently, it was impossible to ascertain parents' feelings or the level of parental involvement.

Data was often in raw form and disjointed. Data could have been summarized to show a "profile" of the school, rather than being present in a raw form that was fragmented and not summarized.

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

The self-study does speak to the school's strengths, but the limitations, while noted, could have been addressed more specifically. While the focus groups and/or departments answered the essential questions in terms of whether the programs/services were provided, in most cases the report lacked specificity. The programs/services were not delineated.

### **Suggested Areas for Further Inquiry:**

- Summarize data for the Visiting Team.

- Include data on the non-performing students and specific interventions that are being used with them. The three-tier invention model that was mentioned off and on was not specific in terms of interventions and 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?*

The Visiting Team found that all stakeholders were involved in the creation and updating of the school's mission and belief statements. The stakeholders were in agreement regarding the vision and the need to improve student achievement.

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

The Visiting Team found that, to a large extent, the school's mission statement and beliefs are aligned with the school's DRSLs.

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

The Visiting Team found that, while the school has diligently worked on the Effective Communication DRSL, resulting in improved language arts CRT scores and NWEA scores in language arts and reading, the DRSLs need to be revisited and further defined. While the school listed a few general indicators for each DRSL, the departments have yet to define or list the content-specific indicators for their classes and the methods to assess the students' proficiency in each of the DRSLs. The school did indicate that it had created a rubric for "Problem Solving and Creative Thinking," but this was a general, school-wide rubric that was not developed by the individual departments in alignment with their curriculum or the State Core.

- 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 Visiting Team found that, to a moderate degree, the staff uses the DRSLs as a basis for policies, and the staff's procedures and knowledge of the DRSLs are evident in the school's culture. The Visiting Team feels it is evident that the stakeholders are cognizant of the DRSLs, but also feel that there is a moderate degree of disconnect as to how the

DRSLs are implemented in the school, and definitely as to how the indicators are to be identified as well as measured.

**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, to a large extent, the staff works collaboratively in its Professional Learning Communities to align curriculum maps to the State Core, and that the staff has developed SMART goals and is writing content-specific “walk-aways” and common assessments to assess student learning.

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

To a moderate degree, the Visiting Team observed that teachers attempted to engage students in inquiry, problem-solving, and higher-order thinking skills. The staff analyzed the results of students’ performance on the NWEA math test and discovered that many students could compute mathematical problems but could not figure out what the written problems meant. So the PLCs began working on implementing the DRSL that addresses problem solving and critical thinking. The leadership and a couple of teachers attended a training on common assessments and wrote a rubric for measuring the level of problem solving and critical thinking. Unfortunately, a number of students are not engaged in learning in the classrooms.

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

To a moderate degree, the teaching staff works collaboratively in its PLCs as well as in cross-curricular meetings to support the development of a curriculum that is aligned to the school’s DRSLs. However, the school is missing the departmental indicators for each of the DRSLs and the method of assessment for these indicators.

- 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 this is an area still in the formative stage of development. The leadership has made it clear that the expectation is to have identified the departmental walk-aways and to begin the development of common assessments. Additionally, the leadership expectation is that each department will use or create a tool to monitor the progress of all students. The intended outcome of the common assessment and the progress monitoring tool is to improve student achievement and/or to modify instructional strategies if needed in order to improve student achievement. In the Social

Studies Department, the teachers are using the results of the common assessments to evaluate their effectiveness, as well as the concepts they need to re-teach to ensure students are mastering the concepts and being successful.

**Instruction:**

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

The Visiting Team observed a wide range of instructional strategies used within each subject area. The team observed in almost every department the use of hands-on activities and the integration of technology. Instructional strategies observed in classrooms included the following:

1. Hands-on activities were observed in science, agriculture, and the food labs.
2. There were quilting, art, and musical projects and a variety of computer applications observed.
3. Engaging multimedia presentations were used, including short presentations containing text, graphics, videos, and links to Internet sites.
4. A driving simulator was used in the driver education class.
5. Collaborative group work was observed in several classes.
6. Creative writing was taught and applied by having the students create their own stage play demonstrating their understanding of the 6+1 Writing Traits concepts.
7. One class invited an outside expert to explain a concept and its connection or application to the real world.
8. Teachers were observed using the interactive whiteboard to varying extents as an instructional tool.

- 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?*

To a moderate extent, the Visiting Team observed that the school and staff have developed strategies for instruction that align to the identified DRSLs. Uintah High School has indicated that it is currently working on the Effective Communicators DRSL. Each department's analysis recognizes how its curriculum and instructional strategies are aligned with all the DRSLs. The Visiting Team observed implementation of the Effective Communication DRSL in a few classrooms. The Visiting Team observed the Six Traits of Writing were posted in several classrooms, and that the Six Traits process was being implemented in Language Arts classrooms. Students in science classrooms were writing and being given guidance on how their written work could be improved.

The Visiting Team observed the Uintah High School DRSLs posted on the walls of each classroom. Team members also observed classrooms where the Critical Thinker DRSL was being implemented. Some classroom observations showed students analyzing and/or critically evaluating information sources and data.

- 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?*

Discussions with focus group leaders and the administration indicated that professional development has focused on the creation of Professional Learning Communities and creating curriculum maps, walk-aways, and common assessments. Visiting Team members observed that, to a moderate extent, the professional development program is guided by identified instructional needs. Many faculty members commented on how they appreciate having time to collaborate in their weekly Professional Learning Communities. The data indicated that student learning needed to improve, so the leadership determined that the development of curriculum maps, walk-aways, and common assessments were the starting point. The degree of development of the maps, walk-aways, and assessments varied greatly between subjects. The school's action plan indicated these are areas of concern for the school. The Visiting Team observed that implementation of these strategies varies greatly between departments. Discussions with faculty members indicated that some faculty members are more reluctant to develop these tools to improve their instructional strategies and support student learning.

Some faculty members have attended professional development workshops on creating curriculum maps and common assessments. Other faculty members mentioned that they are scheduled to attend a similar professional development workshop in the near future.

- 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 noted that the Uintah High School self-study indicated that 100 percent of its teachers are highly qualified. The team observed a few classes where teachers implemented a variety of instructional strategies, including technology and a focus on 21<sup>st</sup> century skills. Several classroom observations showed students doing traditional textbook work and/or teacher lecture. The self-study departmental analysis identified several departments whose members have joined their state and national subject associations (e.g., UCTM, and NCTM). Some departments' analysis indicated that faculty members attend yearly conferences in their subject area. The Visiting Team recognized that faculty members who attend a yearly conference grow professionally, identify effective instructional approaches, and thereby reflect on their own individual instructional practices.

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

The Visiting Team noted that, to a moderate extent, the school has a well-defined plan for the integration of technology. The self-study departmental analyses indicated that each department has technology available for classroom use. As expected, the business, marketing, and computer science and the graphic and commercial art departments utilized a variety of software programs in their classrooms. Language arts teachers indicated that

they use a writing lab for Internet research. The mathematics department used calculators with their students and had a variety of other technology materials for lab activities. The physical education department used a body composition analyzer with students and often uses the Internet for research. The science department reported a wide variety of technological materials used in their classrooms. Special education has a lab available for students in that department. Several of these technologies were observed in use by the Visiting Team.

Other departments' analyses made mention of a variety of technology for instructional use. The Visiting Team observed the use of LCD projectors in the classroom and the use of electronic whiteboards in addition to a sound system. Technology implementation was observed in a few classes during the team's short visit. Students were seen using computers (including laptops). Teachers used multimedia presentation equipment and interactive whiteboards. Technology that was not being used was also seen in several classrooms. A few teachers were observed using scantron papers and computers for testing.

**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?*

To a limited extent, the Visiting Team observed school-wide and classroom assessments that have articulated expectations for student achievement. PLCs have been created and are providing a forum for departments to collaborate together and develop common assessments among disciplines. The Visiting Team noted that the social studies department has worked together to vertically align the curriculum and develop common assessment based on performance standards. The leadership has made progress monitoring and the formation of common assessments high priorities.

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

To a limited extent, the school has a process implemented that fairly and equitably assesses the students' academic achievement at Uintah High School. The school is developing a monitoring system to determine whether or not the students' grades are true indicators of student learning. The leadership has made it clear that the expectation is to determine the level of achievement by creating common assessments and either developing or adopting a tool to monitor student progress. The Visiting Team recognizes that this process is in the beginning stages.

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

To a minimal extent, the professional staff uses the results of the UBSCT, CRTs, CTE, AP and other tests to determine the students' success in achieving its academic expectations. The teachers have reflected on some of the data that has resulted in the implementation of a basic UBSCT English course, the Plus period, and an advisory period. The development of walk-aways and common assessments will hopefully enable teachers within each discipline to streamline the curriculum, focus on the student walk-aways, and determine the success of their students within each content area.

- 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?*

To a moderate degree, the school's professional development program allows teachers the opportunity to collaborate in developing a broad range of student assessment strategies. The staff has been using Marzano's *Classroom Instruction that Works*, which deals with the nine most effective classroom instructional strategies. Teachers are involved in learning about different strategies that enhance and increase student achievement in the classroom. Monday mornings have been set aside for teacher collaboration and the analysis of student data. This time is a welcome opportunity for teachers to collaborate in their departments or across the content areas.

- 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 there is minimal agreement on the use of a school-wide assessment tool. There is an expectation on the part of the leadership for the school to develop a school-wide scoring tool to assess and identify the DRSLs, the indicators of the identified DRSL, and a tool to monitor student achievement.

### **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 Visiting Team found that, to a large extent, the school leadership promotes quality instruction by fostering an academic learning climate that supports teaching and learning. The recent implementation of Professional Learning Communities at Uintah High School, the newly implemented late-start Mondays, the Plus Period program, and the focus on student achievement to include teacher-created walk-a-ways, common assessment, and the beginning stages of implementation of a progress-monitoring

program would indicate the leadership's commitment to improving teaching and learning at Uintah Senior High School.

- 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 Visiting Team observed that the leadership uses data to drive its decisions on programs that promote student achievement and on issues of quality instructional practices. The principal indicated that the PLCs were using Marzano's research to implement teaching strategies that improve student achievement. The leadership made available the opportunity for all staff members to be trained using DuFour's *Learning by Doing* in the creation of the Professional Learning Communities. The leadership created a special math class to address the needs of failing math students after examining the NWEA math scores and determining that students know how to compute math, but could not read and understand the math problems.

- 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 found that, to a large extent, the leadership of the school allocates the necessary resources to ensure a safe and effective learning environment. The school leadership has aligned the school goals with the DRSLs and continues to implement the DRSLs school-wide.

- 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 Visiting Team found that, to a large extent, the school leadership empowers the school community in the decision-making process through the creation of Professional Learning Communities, by delegating responsibility to these communities, and by affording the departments the responsibility of creating their walk-aways and their corresponding common assessments. Teachers expressed their gratitude to the leadership for creating such a workable partnership regarding the school community. All of the school leaders have been teachers at the school, and have a long history of commitment to Uintah High school and its teachers.

- 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?*

The Visiting Team observed that there is a formal system of student monitoring at Uintah High School. The leadership recently implemented an advisory period at the high school.

The intent of the advisory period is to create a class in which the teacher will forge a positive bond with the student, observe his/her performance, and track his/her progress. The student has the same adult mentor for his/her entire tenure at the high school in order to provide continuity.

Depending upon the group of students in the advisory, the teacher has a different focus. For example, an advisory that included gifted students might focus on searching for available scholarships, while an advisory that had many failing students might focus on giving students the skills they need to be successful. The advisories also hold special activities with the intention of building relationships among the students in advisory.

### **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 NAAS, which requires specific responses regarding the physical plant, finances, audit of school records, advertising, etc.

## **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?*

To a limited extent, the school has developed and implemented a comprehensive school improvement plan using the Collaborating for Student Achievement process. The Visiting Team observed that the parents and students were involved in the process in a very limited way. There was no indication that the process was reviewed with all stakeholders on an ongoing basis. Rather, a few parents and students were heavily involved in the process.

Teachers at Uintah High school have developed rubrics for two of the DRSLs, and have developed a school improvement plan to address student achievement. Several steps have been implemented. The Visiting Team did not observe that this process of collaborating

for student achievement has been institutionalized yet. The leadership has made clear the expectation to do so. Departments are emerging in the area of development of their walk-aways and developing common assessments. Uintah High School has created a school-wide rubric to assess problem solving/creative thinking across the disciplines.

- 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?*

To a moderate degree, the school builds skills and capacity for improvement through the creation of PLCs. Staff members have been working collectively to develop their walk-aways and common assessments in each department. The Visiting Team commends the staff for these concerted efforts to improve student learning and achievement in the classroom. The implementation of PLCs has enhanced the collegiality among department members, creating conversations to identify the learning needs of their students.

- 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?*

There was no new action plan written other than a rubric to assess problem solving and creative thinking. The Visiting Team observed confusion with regard to the DRSLs and the action plan. The Visiting Team realizes that the leadership and the staff are committed to student achievement, but there needs to be a clarification of the DRSLs, the indicators of the DRSLs, and an action plan to see that the DRSLs are implemented and assessed. The staff members spent considerable time addressing the DRSLs and steps they had taken to indicate the implementation of the DRSLs, but as yet no action plan had been written. The staff examines the UBSCT, CTE, CRT and AP exams to determine strengths and weaknesses in student achievement. Upon examination of the data results, staff members implemented programs which should address student learning. The establishment of relationships among the stakeholders has created an atmosphere of evident collegiality at Uintah High School. The Visiting Team observed a split among staff members in terms of their level of commitment and support for the plan. These steps are all part of their comprehensive plan, even though they were not written into a formal action plan.

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

The leadership has worked very hard to make sure the staff is trained in PLCs, SMART Goals, assessment, and the Six Traits of Writing. This training has enabled the staff members to focus on writing their walk-aways and developing common assessments within individual departments. The school does create conditions conducive to positive change and continuous improvement.

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

To a moderate extent, the original action plan was implemented at Uintah High School with the exception of involving all stakeholders in the process. There was only minimal involvement among the students and the parents. The school has created advisory classes and PLCs, and the Six Writing Traits have been established. Teacher in-service continues to be ongoing and pertinent to the needs of the faculty and staff. However, the Pre-Engineering Academy has not been implemented, because the students will be receiving this training at the UBTAC.

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

The Visiting Team observed that not all stakeholders were involved. It was evident in the focus groups that parental representation was not fully engaged and involved in the process. Departments did not establish indicators in alignment with the school DRSLs to assess whether students were indeed achieving the desired results for student learning.

## **CHAPTER 5: COMMUNITY BUILDING**

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

The Visiting Team observed that Uintah High School has, to a large extent, worked to foster relationships of collaboration and cooperation within the school. With the implementation of late-start Mondays and Professional Learning Communities, the staff has begun the process of working together to create common assessments, walk-aways, and cross-curricular projects.

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

The Visiting Team noted that the staff of Uintah High School has recently begun to address collaboration through Professional Learning Communities. Since this is just beginning, much work has yet to be addressed by the staff, with the support of the administration and the district office. It was also noted that the staff has implemented a Monday afternoon parent-teacher conference time, with an open-door policy for parents to come to the school and meet with teachers and the administration regarding their students. This flexibility has allowed for more parents to meet with teachers and for parents to be better informed of their student's progress throughout the school year. The team also noted that the implementation of a Sophomore Orientation open to both

students and parents of incoming sophomores created a more welcoming atmosphere and promoted a more open relationship within the community.

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

The Visiting Team found that all stakeholders were involved to a very limited extent. There is an active parent-teacher organization and School Community Council, and these members are very comfortable in the school community. The accreditation process involved few parents, however, it was not evident that a representative group of parents or students was actively involved in the process of self-study. Each of the focus groups did contain one parent from the SCC or PTO and one student nominated by the teaching staff on the committee.

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

The Visiting Team has noted that data was collected and used, to some extent, by the staff to analyze within the individual departments and PLCs the effectiveness of instructional practices, and to open the discussions toward addressing the needs evidenced by the data. So far, the data has been sent to the school board by e-mail and given directly to the SCC, but no means have yet been provided to distribute the information to the community as a whole.

## **CHAPTER 6: MAJOR COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE VISITING TEAM**

### **Commendations:**

- The Visiting Team commends the social studies department for its progress toward completion of its walk-aways, and for common assessments that will reflect student achievement and drive instructional practices.
- The Visiting Team commends the school for its varied course offerings and extracurricular activities, clubs, organizations and sports opportunities in which students can choose to participate.
- The Visiting Team commends the staff for creating a warm and inviting culture of learning for most students, but suggests that the staff find ways to encourage all students to be active members of the school community.
- The Visiting Team commends the staff for creating bonds with students and forging positive student/teacher relationships that emanate genuine caring and concern for the students.

- The Visiting Team commends the administration for its dedicated efforts and commitment to the betterment of the students, and for providing the continuity that is so needed at Uintah High School.
- The Visiting Team commends the staff for providing meaningful cross-curricular projects, especially those that have real-life applications.
- The Visiting Team commends the special education department for aligning its curriculum with the DRSLs, Utah Life Skills, and its social skills units.
- The Visiting Team commends the staff for its recreation of the biannual, traditional parent-teacher conferences into a weekly Monday parent-teacher conference.

### **Recommendations:**

- The Visiting Team recommends that all departments complete their walk-aways and their common assessments.
- The Visiting Team recommends that the school summarize its student data, identify individual student and the overall school needs, and create a pyramid of interventions for all students.
- The Visiting Team recommends that the staff begin progress monitoring of all students and use the information to determine what concepts need to be re-taught and/or instructional strategies that need to be modified.
- The Visiting Team recommends that the school organize the PLCs to include members from across the curriculum as well as from specific departments.
- The Visiting Team recommends that the district office consider the possibility of providing continuity by allowing administrators a longer tenure of service at a given facility.
- The Visiting Team recommends that the school staff revisit the DRSLs and identify departmental indicators and methods of assessing these indicators.
- The Visiting Team recommends that the staff write an action plan based on the school and student needs that arose from the data.
- The Visiting Team recommends that all stakeholders be involved in the school improvement process in an active, participatory manner.
- The Visiting Team recommends that parents be included when surveying the school community.

