

**The Report of the  
Accreditation Visiting Team**

**Westlake High School  
99 North 200 West  
Saratoga Springs, Utah 84045**

**October 24-25, 2012**



**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**

**Westlake High School  
99 North 200 West  
Saratoga Springs, Utah 84045**

**October 24-25, 2012**

**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 24-25, 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 Westlake 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 Fred Openshaw is also commended.

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

Martell Menlove, Ph.D.  
State Superintendent  
of Public Instruction

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\*\*\*CMAC Advisory Representative Appointment

\*\*\*\*USBA Advisory Representative Appointment

\*\*\*\*\*Charter School Representative Appointment

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**WESTLAKE HIGH SCHOOL**  
**ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF**

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John Broadhead..... Assistant Principal  
Kristin Packer..... Assistant Principal  
Stacy Salmans ..... Assistant Principal  
Chad Wilson..... Assistant Principal

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Stephanie Cottam ..... Counselor  
Erin Davis ..... Counselor  
Caleb Miller ..... Counselor  
Linda Pickering ..... Counselor  
Gail Pittard ..... Counselor  
Cindy Greer ..... Registrar  
Lori Crandall ..... School Psychologist

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Samuel Waters  
Joseph Wiederhold  
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Candace Wilson  
Michael Yocom

## **WESTLAKE HIGH SCHOOL**

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

Educating all students to ensure the future of our democracy.

### **BELIEF STATEMENTS**

Our students will become leaders and model citizens in our democracy, our students will be prepared to excel at future educational and life opportunities, and our students and staff will be skilled with innovative thought and creative solutions.

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

1. Charged with Knowledge
2. Ingrained with Skill
3. Infused with Creativity

Date of visit: October 24-25, 2012

## **MEMBERS OF THE VISITING TEAM**

Dr. Roy Hoyt, Hurricane Middle School, Washington School District, Team Chair

Brenda Burr, Sage Creek Elementary, Nebo School District

Vicki Hatch, Mt. Nebo Junior High School, Nebo School District

Mary Stoneman, Mt. Nebo Junior High School, Nebo School District

Steve Crandall, Summit Academy, Charter School

Jack Eves, Hurricane Middle School, Washington School District

## VISITING TEAM REPORT

### WESTLAKE HIGH SCHOOL

#### CHAPTER 1: SCHOOL PROFILE

Westlake High School draws from three communities: Saratoga Springs, Eagle Mountain, and Cedar Valley. The community has recently seen unprecedented growth and transitioned from a rural area to a suburban environment. With 100 percent of students eligible for busing, the school and community population have a longer-than-average commute. The school has limited ethnic diversity, with a largely white population, a small Hispanic population, and a few other minority groups represented. The school has eleven feeder elementary schools and one feeder middle school. Westlake High School currently houses ninth graders due to overpopulation at the middle school. Current enrollment is over 2,500 students, although building capacity is 2,000 students. A large satellite permanent structure has been built on-site to accommodate growth.

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

Analysis of the school profile indicates that Westlake High School is well versed in data collection and analysis. The school has investigated many factors that influence student achievement. Overall, academic achievement is increasing. Due to the fact Westlake High is a new school, it has increased its student population from 1,787 students during the 2009-10 school year to 2,514 students for the current year. Minority populations are stable, with Hispanics, at eight percent, being the largest minority group. Pacific Islanders account for three percent of the school population. The percentage of students eligible for free and reduced-price lunch (31.7 percent) is the second highest out of the eight high schools in the Alpine School District. Stakeholder perception data indicates cheating, advisory time, and swearing to be weaknesses. Strengths identified by stakeholders indicate a supportive administration and a positive learning environment.

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

- Use Data Display to compare CRT data to comparable schools outside of the school district.
- Collect more data related to the Thunder Mastery Program.
- Gather attendance data and disaggregate by subgroup.
- Assemble consistent data related to all clubs and extracurricular activities to compare with numbers of students involved and results of involvement.
- Include information about survey methodology, including construction, participants, and encourage larger sample size (e.g., 100 percent of faculty, staff, and administration).

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

Westlake High School's self-study accurately reflects the strengths of the school. Because the school is relatively new, it may not have developed sufficient data to detail its limitations. However, the self-study has identified areas that may represent possible limitations with future collection of longitudinal data. The longitudinal data will be helpful to the school in identifying, by name, who is learning and who is not in order to inform instruction for the individual students.

**Suggested Areas for Further Inquiry:**

- Collect evidence of the effectiveness of Thunder Mastery Units (TMU).
- Investigate the impact of student advisory time on student achievement.

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

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

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

The Visiting Team determined that the process of refining the mission statement, beliefs, and DRSLs was accomplished collaboratively. A focus group consisting of teachers, administrators, students, and parents met multiple times from the very inception of the school. The Visiting Team noted that the DRSLs were posted in classrooms throughout the school.

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

The Visiting Team found the school's mission and belief statements closely aligned to support 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 evidence of assessments being used to indicate student achievement and growth with respect to the DRSLs. CRTs, TMUs, and departmental common assessments are all being used to improve student achievement. It is evident that through the school's PLCs teachers are using assessments to try to improve student achievement.

- 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 the school's mission, beliefs, and DRSLs do guide the policies and decisions within the school. Great emphasis has been placed on increasing basic skills. The school has also increased achievement through Thunder Mastery Units (TMUs), as is evidenced by the number of students who have brought up their failing grades through that program. Professional development has been focused on improving classroom instruction. Teachers were seen trying to implement the techniques they had learned in their professional development. Departmental PLCs are focusing on improving instruction and increasing student learning by working with each other to improve common assessment scores.

### **Curriculum:**

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

The staff works collaboratively to ensure that standards are defined, helping students achieve various life skills. The teachers also work collaboratively in departments to develop professionalism and incorporate new skills and strategies that will help all students to succeed. Training in and implementation of the Utah Core was evident in all departments. Departments have worked extensively to create common curriculum maps, while making adaptations and modifications as needed. Several departments accessed district grant options for curriculum development and took advantage of a wide variety of professional development opportunities.

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

Teachers are encouraged to continue to look at increasing strategies that require critical thinking, problem solving and collaborative learning. These should be incorporated into the curriculum for all students. Teachers could increase the use of technology to enhance high-level thinking and student engagement.

The school offers a wide variety of classes, including core, honors, AP, and concurrent enrollment. Students are aware of their options and are encouraged to take higher-level classes. The curriculum is based around the PLC Benchmarks, state standards, and Alpine School District mandates.

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

Members of the teaching staff are working on several ways to develop curricula focused on the DRSLs. They are having department meetings and working on disseminating on data. Departments could further focus on using the data to improve and update curriculum maps, including the development of “I can” statements, written in student-friendly language, that will allow the students more ownership in their educational process, curriculum and classroom objectives.

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

The departments create common assessments that will measure the students’ knowledge of content. They collect and talk about the results of the data. Most of the departments wonder what to do and how they can use the data to drive instruction. Department discussion could include analysis of individual assessment topics by identifying strengths and weakness of individual teacher instruction and areas for needed remediation or opportunities for enrichment.

The school has demonstrated a high level of collaboration to ensure accessibility for all students, as evidenced by good communication with the Special Education Department, co-taught classes and special education involvement in team meeting. Opportunities for cross-curricular connections could be further explored to ensure that students participate in real-world experiences.

**Instruction:**

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

The Visiting Team observed a wide variety of instructional strategies within the school. Hands-on activities, group work, class discussions, direct instruction, and debate techniques were used. Effective co-teaching was also observed by the Visiting Team. Co-teaching greatly enhances the learning for all students in the class. Many teachers incorporated technology into their lessons through movies, YouTube clips, and images projected through the computer.

Most students seemed to know what was expected, and learning objectives for the day were posted in several classes.

- 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 observed that the staff has developed strategies for instruction that build the capacity for teaching the identified DRSLs of Knowledge, Skill and Creativity. The staff utilizes the DRSL indicators listed in the self-study.

- 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 observed that the school's professional development program has been guided by instructional needs. Administrators have encouraged teachers to take advantage of professional development opportunities. For example, several teachers had obtained iPad devices, but needed further training to utilize the devices in supporting student learning. Administrators facilitated the needed training.

The Visiting Team understands that weekly collaboration between teachers within departments is taking place. The Professional Learning Community model helps teachers improve their instructional strategies that support student learning. Additionally, teachers read a book that fosters professional growth at the school.

- 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 commends the members of the teaching staff for being knowledgeable and continuing their education and involvement in professional organizations. The Visiting Team recommends utilizing some of the teachers' collaborative time for further reflection on teaching practices to improve student learning.

- 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 is encouraged by the focus on technology integration in the school. The school administrative team has demonstrated a commitment to providing portable computer labs, LCD projectors, SMART boards, iPads, and materials for the robotics class. The Visiting Team noticed an atmosphere of continual use of current, updated technology.

### **Assessment:**

- a) *To what extent has the staff developed classroom or school-wide assessments with performance standards based on clearly articulated expectations for student achievement?*

The Visiting Team found that Westlake High School is developing and using common assessments in most departments. The school is using these common assessments to better enable students to transfer between classes, and to provide data that can be used to improve instruction school-wide. The Visiting Team observed areas in which the school is beginning to use the data collected from the common assessments in individual departments and PLCs. We recommend that the school continue to explore and identify ways to incorporate assessment data into planning and curriculum decisions.

The Visiting Team observed the school's use of TMUs to assist students in identifying and achieving mastery. We heard from students and teachers that there are students who inappropriately take advantage of the TMU process, and recommend ongoing study and revision to alleviate this problem. Also, we recommend continued efforts to educate and communicate to stakeholders the intent and workings of the TMU model.

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

The Visiting Team observed that the school is using a wide variety of summative and formative assessments to assist individual student development and to inform improved instruction. The Visiting Team observed numerous examples of formal and informal student assessment. The use of portfolios, performances, and hands-on experiences was observed.

Currently, CRT results are used to assess school-wide student learning. All eleventh graders are also taking the ACT to assist those students with assessing individual progress toward college and career readiness. Many students are also taking advantage of the honors, AP, concurrent enrollment, EDNET, and pilot programs. Individual teachers are using a multitude of assessments to evaluate student learning and progress.

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

The CRT data is the most widely used assessment data at the school. The examples provided in the school's self-study demonstrate a high degree of disaggregation and evaluation. Additionally, the faculty is focusing on better methods to incorporate the data collected from departmental common assessments. Several departments indicated that they are struggling in this process, but can see the value of continued collaboration to develop effective methods to use the collected data. The Visiting Team recommends the continued collection and use of data to drive curriculum improvement.

- 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?*

All departments are engaged in a variety of professional development opportunities. These are provided to the faculty by Westlake High School, Alpine District, and other governmental programs. Notably, the district made grant monies available during the summer months for departmental meetings focused on the development of common assessments. The school administration is supportive and encourages teachers to pursue professional development opportunities. Monday afternoons are reserved for department and team collaboration and opportunities available for teachers to visit other schools and classes for collaboration. One day each month is also set aside for district and/or state PLC training.

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

It was apparent to the Visiting Team that there is school-wide recognition of and buy-in to the school's mission and values. Programs designed to measure effectiveness are continuing and evolving, based on the needs of the students.

### **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 school has established an academic learning climate in which teaching and learning are supported. The school's leadership team recognizes the need for continuous improvement of the school's academic learning climate and teaching practices, and maintains a constant and steady focus on improving academic success for all students. Many opportunities are provided to students for remediation and extra help through a variety of programs offered during and after school. Staff members have been encouraged to collaborate with their peers and use data to assess student achievement and professional growth.

The Visiting Team encourages the leadership team at Westlake High School to continue to promote research-based best practices in their continuing effort to promote academic excellence.

- 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 at Westlake High School has made an effort to encourage effective decision making that is data-driven and collaborative. The Visiting Team commends the school's commitment to encouraging the use of data in organizational and classroom decision-making. The school does a good job of collaborating with all stakeholders in their decision-making process. Staff members, parents, and students feel free to express their ideas and opinions. All stakeholders feel their voices are listened to and heard by the leadership team as decisions are made.

- 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 leadership team regularly assesses the effectiveness of instructional practices and organizational conditions, and engages in continuous reflection to identify and develop appropriate interventions to improve student learning and to strengthen instructional effectiveness. Most teachers and departments actively monitor student progress in achieving the essential knowledge and skills in specific subjects.

- 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 current principal is to be commended for creating an environment of trust and supportive relationships with students, parents, faculty and staff. The members of the administrative team work well together and recognize the need for continuous improvement of the school's academic learning climate and teaching practices. A visitor can feel the pride that students feel for their school from the moment he/she walks through the door. Students enjoy each other, and there was no evidence of tension between different groups of students. The custodial staff is commended for keeping the facility extremely clean.

- 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 school has put in place an advisory time during each class period for make-up work, remediation, and to meet the needs of each student. Visiting Team members were impressed that most students feel there is an adult in the school they can go to for help.

### **School Services:**

This standard is dealt with in the school's NWAC 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?*

Westlake High School has implemented a comprehensive improvement plan that is evidenced through data showing increases in student learning, classroom learning activities and assessments observed by the Visiting Team, independent departmental SMART goals centered on student learning gains, and discussions in learning communities centered around individual student learning.

- 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 has observed that the school has developed and implemented a comprehensive school improvement plan. The action plan included in the self-study clearly recorded the progress of the school. The Visiting Team encourages Westlake High School to review and revise its action plan and on an ongoing basis. For example, to achieve the goal of improving social skills by decreasing bullying and swearing, the plan states that teachers will monitor the halls during class breaks. The Visiting Team did not observe teachers in the halls during class breaks.

- 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 Visiting Team felt that the action plan was adequate in addressing the goals Westlake High School has set for itself. Survey data was used and assessed to create their goals taking into account all stakeholders. Through data analysis, Westlake High chose to focus on improving graduation rates, increasing rigor, and decreasing bullying, cheating and swearing. The Visiting Team recommends that the action plan be continually revised so that tasks better meet the desired goals. The action plan for student achievement should focus on what students will know and be able to do, as well as how the improvement in student learning will be measured.

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

Westlake High is an exemplary school and has created conditions that support productive change and continuous improvement. From the formation of the school, the idea of

continuous improvement has been integrated among all stakeholders. The administrative team has demonstrated great support and vision within this area.

## CHAPTER 5: COMMUNITY BUILDING

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

The Visiting Team saw examples of community building throughout the school. There is an overall feeling of belonging among students, teachers, administration and parents. This is especially notable given the school's tremendous population growth, bussing and geographic issues.

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

The school actively engages parents and families as partners in the learning process through a variety of programs, resources and instructional materials. The school also encourages participation in unique programs such as the Equine Science, Energy Foundations, and robotics. The Visiting Team observed collaboration within the school community, both in departments and across departments.

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

The self-study process is embedded within the fabric of the school. All stakeholders have had a hand in the process. The Visiting Team recommends that the school continue this process, with particular attention to data collection and use of the data in continuous self-study.

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

The school uses testing, surveys, meetings, performances, art exhibits, collaborative time, and minimal days to help communicate school results to all stakeholders. Additionally, the school website, Skyward, Textwires, and e-mails are used to communicate results to parents and the community at large.

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

### **Commendations:**

- The Visiting Team commends the school for strategically implementing an improvement plan from the inception of the school. It's obvious to the team the school has embraced the accreditation process through the involvement of all stakeholders.
- The Visiting Team commends the school for cultivating a nurturing climate of mutual respect among students, administrators, and teachers.
- The Visiting Team commends the school's administrative team for fostering trust and respect and earning the admiration of students, teachers, and parents.
- The Visiting Team commends the school for working to create a culture of unity, tradition, and pride by providing a wide range of academic and extracurricular options for all students. The school has been creative in developing unique and developing classes, programs, service, and clubs.
- The Visiting Team commends the school for becoming a place where every student feels safe and believes he/she has an adult who cares about him/her, which is a remarkable accomplishment considering the challenges of a large student population.

### **Recommendations:**

- The Visiting Team recommends that the school continue to utilize advisory time; however, it needs to be more clearly defined to promote consistency and time on task within the class period. Advisory can be enrichment, remediation, or completion of missing assignments, but all students should be actively engaged in learning.
- The Visiting Team recommends that the school continue its data collection, but that it also take the next step through the collaborative process to use data to inform and improve instruction.
- The Visiting Team recommends that the school continue to refine the Thunder Mastery Units (TMUs). The Visiting Team observed a disconnect that leads to a lack of clarity between stakeholders at every level of the implementation process.
- The Visiting Team recommends that the school continue to encourage increased academic rigor to allow the opportunity for all students to perform at higher levels. Greater emphasis should be placed on helping students understand their academic options within each department.