The Report of the
Accreditation Visiting Team

American Fork Junior High School

20 West 1120 North
American Fork, Utah 84003

April 7-8, 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

American Fork Junior High School

20 West 1120 North
American Fork, Utah 84003

April 7-8, 2009

UTAH STATE OFFICE OF EDUCATION

Patti Harrington, Ed.D.
State Superintendent of Public Instruction

DIVISION OF
STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AND SCHOOL SUCCESS

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword ii
Utah State Board of Education iii
Alpine School District Board of Education and District Administration 1
American Fork Junior High School Administration and Staff 2
American Fork Junior School Mission Statement, Belief Statements, and DRSLs 4
Members of the Visiting Team 5
Visiting Team Report 6
Chapter 1: School Profile 6
    Suggested Areas for Further Inquiry 7
Chapter 2: Northwest Association of Accredited Schools (NAAS)
    Teaching and Learning Standards 7
    Mission, Beliefs and Desired Results for Student Learning (DRSLs) 7
    Curriculum 8
    Instruction 10
    Assessment 12
Chapter 3: NAAS Support Standards 13
    Leadership and Organization 13
Chapter 4: NAAS School Improvement Standard 14
Chapter 5: Community Building 16
Chapter 6: Major Commendations and Recommendations of the Visiting Team 18

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, April 7-8, 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 American Fork Junior 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 Shane Farnsworth is also commended.

The staff and administration are congratulated for their desire for excellence at American Fork Junior High 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 American Fork Junior High School.

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AMERICAN FORK JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF

School Administration

Shane Farnsworth..... Principal
Todd Dalley ..... Assistant Principal
James Young..... Assistant Principal

Counseling

Adele Whiteley .....Head Counselor
Laura Bartlet ..... Counselor
Suzanne Riley ..... Counselor
Cody Thompson..... Counselor
Megan Macalupu .....Counselor (Intern)

Support Staff

Robert Reese .....Head Custodian
Lenna Watkins .....Day Custodian
Larry Matthews..... Lead Custodian
Sherly Cowley..... Attendance Secretary
Leslie Cleveland.....Financial Secretary
Amy Hansen..... Secretary
Terese Hansen..... Administrative Secretary
Janine Walkenhorst.....Registrar

Faculty

Kristen Adams
Robert W. Aiman
Kelly P. Anstead
Jermie S. Arnold
Dawn M. Barson
John Bass
Janet M. Bates
Kenneth W. Bryson
Jack L. Chruma
Corey D. Clayton
Grant B. Cotterell
Pamela H. Dallon
Griffin M. Dean
Gerald T. Dibb
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Ashley K. McNeil
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John D. Moon
Karen 'Paige' Olson
Jali Page
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Lesa Peet
Melinda 'Mindy' Peterson
Mikelle D. Roth
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Cindy B. Schow
Sherrie A. Scott
Derek M. Smith
Julie A. Smith
Shauna Smith
Wayne J. Smith
Jacquelyn O. Starker
Jr. Steffes
Jesse E. Szugye
Matthew D. Thornton
Rebecca L. Underwood
Susan Walker
Shilo A. Ward
Shelly Way
Heather Whitworth
Ronald G. Wicks
Kenneth J. Wright

AMERICAN FORK JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

MISSION STATEMENT

Success in Learning – Success in Life.

BELIEF STATEMENTS

Achievement: Effort, Progress and Learning

We believe that maximum effort will result in learning.

We believe everyone can experience success as they learn and progress from their current level.

Integrity: Respect and Responsibility

We believe students learn best in an environment in which faculty and students respect them selves and others.

We believe we succeed as a school when we take responsibility for what we can control.

Community: School Pride, Involvement, and our school Traditions

We believe that students will be more likely to succeed as they feel connected to others through School Pride, Involvement and our school Traditions.

DESIRED RESULTS FOR STUDENT LEARNING (DRSLs)

1. Civic and Social Responsibility
   - Following School Rules – attendance, punctuality, dress, language (Code of Conduct)
   - Integrity – honest, truthful, does own work
   - Respect – for faculty and staff, for other students, for physical facilities
   - Motivation – on task, prepared, turns in assignments, gets and does make-up work

2. Critical Thinking (Reasoning Skills)

3. Effective Communication

Date of visit: April 7-8, 2009

MEMBERS OF THE VISITING TEAM

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

Jake Hunt, Lincoln Academy, Utah Charter School

Karla Porter, Rocky Mountain Junior High, Weber School District

Natalie Rudel, Sunset Ridge Middle School, Jordan School District

VISITING TEAM REPORT

AMERICAN FORK JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

CHAPTER 1: SCHOOL PROFILE

American Fork Junior High was built in 1975 after many years in an older building. The current building was remodeled inn 2003. The school population reached 1,800 students before a second junior high was built in 1995. The population is currently over 1,600 students.

The community of American Fork lies 30 miles south of Salt Lake City near Mount Timpanogos. In the 17 years between 1990 and 2007, the community population grew by almost 11,000 people. Ninety-five percent of the population is white, and the median age is 24.9 years.

The school-wide attendance rate has grown steadily since 2004 to 96.26 percent in 2007 (the latest statistics available).

The school has moved to a collaborative environment where students are released one hour early every Monday to provide time for departmental collaboration.

American Fork Junior High has instituted an eighth grade completion program along with Cave Time, a program that provides timely intervention and enrichment for all students.

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

The school found that it was ready to change its mission and beliefs. Some of the ideas expressed in the original mission and beliefs no longer expressed the views of the stakeholders. The school was already changing before the new principal came at the beginning of the 2008-2009 school year, but even more changes came about when he brought his vision to the school.

The school also discovered that the advisory time that the school had been using was not fulfilling its purpose. A visit to Adlai Stevenson High School encouraged the school to develop and implement CAVE Time, a time for students to receive interventions or enrichment.

Scores on state tests have shown that some subgroups are not progressing the same way the majority of the school is progressing. The school is determined to study this trend more carefully in order to assist students who are not progressing with the rest of the students.

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

The school has determined which DRSL to concentrate on first: Civic and Social Responsibility. The action plan is also in place to move ahead with the school plan. However, the indicators for the next two DRSLs have not yet been determined. This is an area that needs to be addressed in order for the profile to be most usable.

As further study into the subgroups that are falling behind is completed, this data needs to be included in the profile.

The school also needs to look carefully at how well students are using the enrichment portion of CAVE Time.

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

The Visiting Team was extremely impressed by what the school is doing to encourage student success. The self-study accurately portrays not only these successes but also areas of weakness. The team believes the school looked very carefully at what has needed to be changed and has then set about doing just that. The report appears to be an honest, accurate self-study.

Suggested Areas for Further Inquiry:

- Data is routinely collected and used by the school to make changes. However, this is not the case with all of the departments. Departments need to collect their own data and realign their curricula, instruction, and assessment based on the collected data.

- An analysis of student success and progress during the time the school used advisory should be compared to student success and progress while using CAVE Time.

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?

Evidence is present to indicate that American Fork Junior High utilized a consensus-building process that involved teachers and administrators in defining the school's mission and belief statements. Previous statements were revisited and new statements implemented. However, the process provided a limited role for other stakeholders such as parents, students, and community members. Since few students are aware that the school has implemented these statements, it is recommended that American Fork Junior High develop strategies for infusing the mission statement, belief statements, and DRSLs into classroom instruction. Old statements should be replaced with revised documents, which should be prominently displayed not only in classrooms, but all areas of the school.

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

There is widespread investment among the faculty and staff in the school's desired results, and there is evidence that the DRSLs' concepts are being integrated into classrooms. All stakeholders were involved in revisiting and revising the DRSLs, and much effort has been made in aligning DRSLs to the school's mission and belief statements.

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

Discussion with various stakeholders showed understanding of and commitment to the newly developed DRSLs. Indicators have been developed and implemented with the Critical Thinking DRSL. Pre- and post-tests and common assessments are utilized. Further plans are made to develop and implement remaining DRSLs in the same manner. American Fork Junior High is commended on its vision and dedication to implementing these remaining DRSLs.

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?

American Fork Junior High's mission and belief statements address the commitment of the administration, teachers, and staff to supporting student achievement and success. The Visiting Team found strong evidence of the mission statement and belief statements in the practice and culture of the school. It was the intent of faculty and staff to have statements and DRSLs become the driving force of the school, and because of this, many meetings were held to revisit and revise statements and DRSLs.

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 faculty follows Utah Core Curriculum and has used weekly collaboration time within departments to review and revise curriculum maps, identify "learning targets" and to create common assessments. Most of this is done in departments and between teachers who share a common subject. The faculty has an understanding that through the employment of common curriculum and assessments and the analysis of data from these assessments, teachers can modify teaching strategies to better meet the needs of the individual learners. The Visiting Team commends the faculty for its focus on students learning and collaborating for student achievement, and encourages the faculty to use the data collected from the common assessments to drive and modify instruction as needed within departments.

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

Since critical thinking is one of the school's DRSLs, the faculty has received professional development over the past couple of years and has created a school-wide test on inductive reasoning. Posters summarizing inductive reasoning skills are visible in the classrooms, and the faculty continues to be challenged by the administration to implement as many activities as possible in which inquiry, problem-solving and higher-order thinking skills are applied. The Visiting Team recognizes an effort by the school to keep this a continuing part of school culture.

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

Critical Thinking
As stated previously, the school has received training on critical thinking skills, and provided input on a school-wide assessment and teaching strategies during the 2005- 06 school year. This has been summarized on a poster that is in every classroom to remind teachers to use lessons on inductive reasoning as much as possible.

Civic and Social Responsibility
During the 2006-07 school year, bimonthly lessons in civic and social responsibility were collaboratively created by faculty and taught during the advisory period. The accreditation DRSL team created a rubric for identifying performance indicators of civic and social responsibility which was presented and approved by faculty. The rubric is currently used school-wide to assign citizenship grades. Though the lessons have not continued this year, with CAVE

Time replacing the advisory period, the faculty recognizes the need to readdress this DRSL.

Effective Communication (2008-09)
The implementation of the effective communication DRSL this year is in preliminary stages. The American Fork Junior High faculty has brainstormed ideas for teaching these strategies in the classroom and has had the opportunity to choose and put some of these strategies into practice in the individual classrooms.

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

The staff collaborates to create learning targets and common assessments. When an instructional need is identified, teachers have expressed a willingness to modify instruction so that all students can reach the learning outcomes. However, individual teachers and departments are at different points along the path of collaboration and the implementation of common assessments. Many departments recognize that data is not used to drive curriculum as much as it could be.

State and national standardized tests also drive curriculum at American Fork Junior High. Departments are looking at the data provided by the CRT, ITBS, and DWA scores and looking for ways to close gaps and, in general, improve student learning.

Instruction:

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

The Visiting Team observed most teachers using direct instruction supplemented by technology in the form of multimedia presentations, interactive white boards and the Go My Access computer program in the Language Arts classrooms. Also observed were lab activities, performance tasks, and open-ended questioning, as well as classroom discussion.

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?*

American Fork Jr. High focused last year on the DRSL of critical thinking, and has researched instructional strategies in four areas: compare and contrast, classify, analogies, and similes and metaphors. These are represented on posters in the classroom to remind teachers to incorporate them in daily instruction.

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?*

In the past, the school's professional development was dictated solely by outcomes of standardized testing. Now it includes a joint effort between the faculty and administration to identify deficiencies in school-wide instruction. Some current needs identified for which professional development has been provided include:

1. Technology, the Go My Access writing program and grant writing for technology.
2. Communication with an emphasis in writing.
3. Identifying and formulating "learning targets" within departments.
4. Implementing the professional learning communities model and effective collaboration.

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 finds that teachers at American Fork Junior High School are endorsed in their areas and meet the "highly qualified" requirements of No Child Left Behind. The faculty reports that the administration of American Fork Junior High is very supportive of teachers participating in workshops, clinics, conferences and other personal professional development in which best practices and idea-sharing takes place. The faculty also has an hour set aside every week for departments to collaborate and share ideas.

In interviews with teachers, the Visiting Team also found that most teachers were reflective on their own practice. Most exhibited a desire to identify individual areas for improvement in their own teaching practices and a willingness to make any necessary changes.

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 finds that most classrooms have technology in the way of computers. Some departments report that grants have been used to purchase more technology such as computers, GPS devices and cameras, which are used in the curriculum and instruction. Go My Access is also used in language arts classes. However, a well-defined plan for the integration of technology was not observed.

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 staff at American Fork has been working on "I can" statements this year. Once the "I can" statements are created they are given to the students. The majority of the school will have developed these by the end of the year. Some departments have created common assessments, and the rest of the school is planning on developing common assessments next year.

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 administration and school leadership teams review end-of-year testing data. They create recommendations for coming years based upon the data.

American Fork Junior High has created an eighth grade completion program. All seventh and eighth grade students must complete 15 credits in order to qualify for the program. Students who do not pass core classes are offered these classes through summer instruction. Due to this program (in combination with other programs), the counselors have tracked a significant decrease in failing grades.

American Fork Junior High employs three trackers who monitor student progress, attendance, and behavior. They try to help provide interventions to improve student performance. The ESL coordinator monitors the progress of ESL students. If students are struggling, the coordinator places them in classes that provide needed interventions. Special education students are enrolled in a learning skills class. The teacher of the class tracks student progress and helps them complete missing assignments. The learning skills class also teaches study skills and test-taking strategies.

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

American Fork Junior High consistently evaluates year-end testing data. Great strides have been made and effort put into creating CAVE Time, which monitors the progress of students on a daily basis. Students are provided an updated grade report daily and have the opportunity to receive timely interventions in classes they are failing. Counselors consistently follow failing students' progress.

Some departmental professional learning communities study data and make recommendations for coming years based on core testing. Data is used within few departments to assign students to honors or remedial classes. American Fork

Junior High realizes that improvement still needs to be made in order for all departments to be driven by data.

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?*

Alpine School District and American Fork Junior High have invested in professional development intended to improve student assessment strategies. Classes have been offered at the district level, and professional development study groups have been created at the school level. Researched literature has been the focus of district- and school-offered courses.

Within collaborative groups, assessment models and methods are discussed. Often teachers will compare assessments. Teachers realize that there are many ways to assess student learning. Projects, dioramas, book clubs, and comic strips are just a few examples of the variety of assessment used at American Fork Junior High.

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

American Fork Junior High created a school-wide test on inductive reasoning. All departments contributed questions and were encouraged to incorporate and continue to use lessons that included inductive reasoning.

American Fork Junior High has created a citizenship rubric focused on civic and social responsibility. Teachers use the rubric to determine citizenship grades within their advisory classrooms. With the change to CAVE Time, the rubric has yet to be re-implemented into the school culture. American Fork Junior High realizes the value and potential of the rubric and is looking for ways to institutionalize the rubric into school culture.

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 administrative team not only leads in promoting quality instruction, but has empowered teacher leaders to promote quality and change within the school. Everything the teachers do is based on the question, "Is this what's best for kids?"

The administration studies proposals by the teachers and readily gives support to those that are well thought out and feasible for the 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 was impressed by the amount of research that has gone into changes within the school. The school researched through site visits to schools that are already engaged in similar programs, as well as other research methods. The school has kept and disaggregated information on student success, including attendance and numbers of students failing classes. Collaboration takes place every Monday, and departments as well as singletons (teachers who are the only ones teaching a subject in the school) have an opportunity to collaborate with colleagues on teaching and testing.

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 interviewed stakeholders about the school leadership regarding their stewardship. Stakeholders are impressed by the careful use of resources and the attentiveness to detail shown by the administration and other school leaders. Under direction by the school leaders, teachers work together to promote the school's DRSLs, and the major thrust of the school—as outlined in the school goals and action plan—centers around student success. CAVE time (an opportunity for intervention for those who are failing a class) receives a major portion of the school's attention as it evolves. CAVE time was implemented in December 2008, and since then has affected the way teachers give intervention as well as students' success rate. The school has also implemented an eighth grade completion program. Students who complete all of the credits in seventh and eighth grades as outlined by the state are invited to a completion celebration that includes a ceremony, certificate, and special activity. This has encouraged students and involved parents.

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?*

As noted above, the Visiting Team saw substantial evidence of the school leadership's desire to involve the school community—including faculty, staff, and parents—in the educational process. The school community has been asked for and has given input to the entire process. The community members feel that they have been listened to and that their opinions are valued.

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?*

One of the school's formal systems for getting to know a student is the SEOP. Individual SEOPs are held for all seventh and eighth grade students. In addition, every student in the school is monitored four times every week to see that he/she is not failing any classes. If he/she is, he/she is required to attend an intervention during CAVE Time in a class that he/she is failing. Students have plenty of time (35 minutes four times per week) during CAVE Time to work with teachers and to get to know those whom they feel are interested in them or with whom they feel a connection or bond. Teachers are interested in students and their success, and not only offer interventions for students who need them, but also enrichment for students who wish to broaden their horizons in many different hobbies or experiences. Counselors also run programs that are designed to help students who need extra attention or help with their studies.

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 applauds American Fork Junior High for its determination and dedication to student learning and school improvement. Assessment of school strengths and needed areas of improvement provides focus for collaborative meetings. The faculty, administration, staff, and community members meet regularly to discuss the direction of the school, and collaborative teams meet weekly to discuss these issues. Great reflection has been made throughout the process, and when weaknesses are discovered, changes are made.

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?*

American Fork Junior High's organizational culture supports school improvement initiatives and professional development. The school's flexibility and enthusiasm are reflected in faculty buy-in and determination to keep what works and discard what doesn't. Staff members are actively involved in staff development based on their own needs and desires. Collaborative team leaders meet regularly and

discuss student and school needs. Weekly team collaboration meetings have been implemented where faculty members discuss best practices.

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 action plan should reflect the mission and belief statements of the school, and should be a strategic approach to accomplishing the DRSLs and addressing the critical areas of follow-up as determined by the school through the accreditation process. The Visiting Team commends American Fork Junior High for the fine work that is being accomplished toward these ends. The action plan was revisited and revised to create a much clearer plan, and there is a great commitment by faculty and staff members to the completion of this plan. Portions of the action plan may be difficult to measure; however, the Visiting Team is confident that adjustments will be made as needed.

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

American Fork Junior High fosters a school climate that focuses on student achievement. A highly enthusiastic and dedicated administration and faculty, coupled with an active Community Council and PTSA, address student learning issues and concerns. There is a strong desire to do what is best for students and continual experimentation of new strategies. There is an overwhelming atmosphere of collegiality and a climate conducive to continuous improvement.

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

The original action plan was not available to the Visiting Team. However, the original action plan was revisited and revised to create much clearer goals. (See *(c)* above.)

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

The recommendations of the 2003 Visiting Team were not included in the self-study. One of the recommendations dealt with increasing schoolwide understanding of the DRSLs. American Fork Junior High involved all stakeholders in revisiting and revising the DRSLs and much effort has been made in aligning DRSLs to the school's mission and belief statements.

As mentioned before, in discussion with various stakeholders the Visiting Team found understanding and commitment to the newly developed DRSLs. Indicators have been developed and implemented with the Critical Thinking DRSL. Pre- and

post-tests and common assessments are utilized. Critical thinking is in the process of being institutionalized at American Fork Junior High.

CHAPTER 5: COMMUNITY BUILDING

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

American Fork Junior High has made significant efforts to reach out to the community. American Fork Junior High has a very active and passionate PTSA and Community Council. The PTSA and Community Council communicated that they feel the administration and majority of the faculty work well with them. These community groups feel that they have a voice at the school. Parents have spent time in the classrooms seeing the improvements that Community Council money has funded.

American Fork Junior High participates in the collaborative professional learning time supported by Alpine School District. School is released an hour early on Mondays, and teachers have an hour to meet with their collaboration team leaders within their departments. The majority of the departments have created learning targets called “I can” statements, and are in the process of creating common assessments. American Fork Junior High recognizes that it has come a long way with collaborative learning and still have some improvements to make. Some of the next planned steps include giving common assessments and studying the data provided by the assessments.

American Fork Junior High has reached out to its feeder schools in order to better understand the incoming students. This research has provided valuable information in how to meet the needs of incoming students.

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

American Fork Junior High has set aside Monday afternoons for professional learning communities. These are separated by department and have collaborative team leaders that guide discussion and improvement.

The majority of recent collaboration time has been used to implement a new program called CAVE Time. This program focuses on improving student performance and providing timely interventions. Students receive a daily report of current grades. Teachers provide interventions for those or enrichments activities within a 30-minute daily period. Students who have failing grades are required to attend intervention classes. Students without failing grades have the opportunity

to choose to attend an enrichment activity or intervention to make up missed work. Counselors also track those students who continually are in need of interventions. They assign these students to appropriate intervention classes during CAVE Time.

Plans for future collaborative time include reviewing student data, refining "I can" statements, and working on common assessments.

American Fork Junior High uses PowerSchool to communicate to students' families. This allows families to network with teachers about their students' grades. American Fork Junior High strives to make parent teacher conferences meaningful by providing forums with topics to assist parents as part of the student success. The Community Council has made efforts to reach out to city council members to involve them in decisions that effect student learning.

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

American Fork Junior High has involved all teachers, staff, selected, volunteer, and elected parents, students, and community members. The Community Council members, parents, and students were all involved in developing the DRSLs.

The guiding question of the accreditation teams was what was best for the students and community. During the accreditation process, American Fork Junior High decided to refine the mission statement. This process was school-driven, with some input from community stakeholders.

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

Results identified as potential areas of school improvement were communicated to teachers through faculty meetings. Time was set apart during PLC time and on professional development days for training to improve areas of need. Faculty members communicated upcoming changes to students through advisory sessions. Communication of success and potential areas of improvement were expressed to the community through newsletters, PTA meetings, Community Council members, orientation, back-to-school nights, and focus group members.

CHAPTER 6: MAJOR COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Commendations:

- The Visiting Team commends American Fork Junior High for placing the focus of the school on students first. By consistently asking, “What’s best for kids?” the school has been able to accomplish great things in the lives of the children it serves, regardless of the cost in terms of time, effort, and comfort on the part of the adults involved.

- The Visiting Team commends American Fork Junior High for looking carefully at where it is and where it wants to go. By using data and research to guide the quest for excellence, the school is better able to make the investment needed to change. One stellar example of this is the large team that went to Chicago to visit Adlai Stevenson High School in preparation for the implementation of CAVE Time.

- The Visiting Team commends American Fork Junior High for the level of buy-in exhibited by the faculty, staff and school community into the major changes within the school. The faculty has made the school’s goals so much a part of the culture of the school that even with recent administrative changes the school has been able to stay the course because it is faculty driven.

- The Visiting Team commends American Fork Junior High for its use of weekly collaboration time to improve teaching to benefit the students.

Recommendations:

- The Visiting Team recommends that American Fork Junior High work toward the use of data to drive instruction within the departments.

- The Visiting Team recommends that American Fork Junior High inform students and the entire community of the school’s educational agenda, including mission, beliefs, and DRSLs, so that they can more fully become partners in the student’s education. The school should display the revised agenda in classrooms and throughout the school.

- The Visiting Team recommends that American Fork Junior High keep the level of energy and enthusiasm exhibited as the school has implemented major programs such as eighth grade completion, CAVE Time, and the use of other interventions to assist students.

- The Visiting Team recommends that American Fork Junior High add more detail to the two DRSLs that are not complete by supplying indicators that provide benchmarks of success. Also, add steps to the action plan to reach the indicators.