

**The Report of the
Accreditation Visiting Team**

**Brockbank Junior High School
2935 South 8560 West
Magna, Utah 84044**

April 4-5, 2011



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

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2935 South 8560 West
Magna, Utah 84044**

April 4-5, 2011

UTAH STATE OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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Salt Lake City, Utah

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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, April 4-5, 2011, 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 Brockbank 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 Terri Van Winkle is also commended.

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

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12/28/2010

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BROCKBANK JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

MISSION STATEMENT

Brockbank Junior High School's mission is to guide our students to academic success while fostering social and emotional growth.

BELIEF STATEMENTS

At Brockbank Junior High School, we believe that:

- Implementation of middle level principles—student teams, curriculum integration, teacher collaboration, subject exploration and variety in instructional methods leads to increased student achievement.
- High academic expectations increase student achievement.
- Teachers are models, guides, and mentors who use research-based instructional methods to facilitate learning.
- A positive and safe learning environment is created through discipline, consistency, and collaboration between school and community.
- Social values, character development, and cultural respect are part of the curriculum.
- Students must come to accept responsibility for their own learning.
- Education is preparation for life.

DESIRED RESULTS FOR STUDENT LEARNING (DRSLs)

Students at Brockbank Junior High will be able to:

Effectively communicate to others what they know and think.

- Read effectively for a variety of purposes
- Write with clarity and purpose
- Communicate through oral presentation and listening
- Recognize and evaluate various forms of communication

Demonstrate their understanding of content knowledge.

- Apply previous knowledge to new situations
- Identify and use a variety of strategies to solve problems
- Gather and organize information

- Initiate and reflect on their own learning
- Achieve high standards of literacy and basic knowledge

Become responsible citizens.

- Demonstrate individual responsibility and self control
- Practice a healthy lifestyle
- Understand and promotes democratic values
- Participate in activities that promote the public good
- Learn individual and teaming skills

Date of Visit: April 4-5, 2011

MEMBERS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Lori Gardner, Park City School District, Visiting Team Chair

Robert Fleming, Spanish Fork Junior High School, Nebo School District

Elizabeth Lewis, South Hills Middle School, Jordan School District

Janet Loureiro, Fairfield Junior High School, Davis School District

VISITING TEAM REPORT
BROCKBANK JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

CHAPTER 1: SCHOOL PROFILE

Brockbank Junior High School in Granite School District has been an integral part of the township of Magna for over fifty years. The community consists mostly of white, working-class families. Many of the students who attend Brockbank Junior High are second- or third-generation attendees. The school currently has 944 students. Sixty-eight percent of the students are Caucasian, and the largest minority group is Hispanic. About 45 percent of students receive free or reduced-price lunch. The school draws students from a wide geographic area, including several growing, upscale housing developments.

Terri Van Winkle is the current principal. She and her assistant principal, Lois Elkington, have been at the school since 2005. The school has three counselors and 44 teachers, 75 percent of whom have been at the school five or more years.

It is clear that the school community is invested in Brockbank Junior High and that the parents, teachers, and administrators are dedicated to providing quality learning opportunities for their students.

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

The school leadership team began the accreditation process by revising the school profile and took the previous work as its guide. The profile revealed changes in enrollment due to a boundary change; however, the demographics of the school have remained fairly constant. The school population is ethnically diverse and has a high percentage of students whose families are economically unstable, but are in stable housing. Fifteen percent of the students are English language learners. Approximately 15 percent of students are served in special education, a figure higher than the district average of eight percent due to two self-contained cluster units. However, 78 percent of special education students are mainstreamed with resource supportive classes, which have fostered collaborative relationships between special and regular educators.

The school profile reveals that the majority of students are academically successful, as demonstrated by GPA and CRT scores. In the past three years, the numbers of students who have a 3.5 or above GPA has increased by 50 percent, the number of students who have a 3.0 or above GPA has increased by 27 percent, and the number of students who have a GPA of 1.0 or below has dropped by 30 percent. In science and language arts, the school's CRT scores have been above the district average; however, math scores have been significantly below district and state averages.

In the past five years the administration has made school climate and student behavior a focus. The school has implemented interdisciplinary teaming in seventh and eighth grade and proactive behavioral interventions, which have contributed to significant decreases in office referrals, in- and out-of-school suspensions, and safe school referrals. Faculty, parent, and student surveys affirm the impression that the school environment is safe, orderly, and positive.

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

The school profile provides a general outline of student success but does not delve deeply enough into who is learning and who is not. Testing data is not disaggregated sufficiently enough to identify in what particular areas focus needs to be given. For example, the data is provided by subject, but not broken down by grade, so it is unclear whether there are particular grade levels or subjects that need attention.

The upward trend of GPA distribution is noteworthy, but the Visiting Team recommends further study as to what happens as students move from grade to grade. It was reported that a high percentage of students fail to graduate from the feeder high school, so a clear understanding of the numbers of students with deficient credit at Brockbank Junior High might serve to promote higher success rates for outgoing freshmen.

As the school has implemented a new program for behavior management, it is recommended that the school continue to track data to evaluate program effectiveness. Further disaggregation will reveal whether there are grade level issues or other considerations that need to be given to foster the positive school climate.

Stakeholder perceptions are an integral part of the self-study process and reporting, yet the information provided was very limited. There was no indication of how the surveys were distributed or how many respondents there were from each group, and only three items were presented.

Finally, in order for the school profile to serve its important function of informing decisions for the school's continuous improvement, it is imperative that the information provided serve to provide historical framework of not only demographics, but also the programs provided for the improvement of teaching and learning. No mention was made of the types of learning experiences, such as classes, intervention or enrichment. In other sections of the self-study, a reading program was referred to, but no data on its effectiveness was provided. The Visiting Team recommends that the profile be updated yearly and that thought be given to what needs to be included to provide a more comprehensive picture of the school.

Suggested Areas for Further Inquiry:

- Standardized testing data should be disaggregated to provide a more detailed look at student achievement.
- Study credit deficiency rates and patterns to better support high school freshmen.
- Collect data on the implementation and impact of school-wide literacy efforts.
- Consider the school profile as the means to inform stakeholders of the school's progress. Possibly the annual revision of the profile could become the responsibility of one of the school's standing committees.

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?*

In preparation of the accreditation team visit, the Brockbank administration and faculty decided to revisit the school's mission statement to be sure it reflected their current focus and beliefs, and that it would guide their work through the accreditation process. The school did not change its stated mission, which is to "guide students to academic success while fostering social and emotional growth." The beliefs also remained unchanged, and reflect important statements that guide the philosophical foundation for their work.

The DRSLs did undergo significant revision from those of 2005. The school's leadership team realized that the prior DRSLs could not be measured and that, while the school had been focused on improvement, the DRSLs were not focused upon. The faculty and administration revised the DRSLs during a series of faculty meetings. Information was shared with parents via the PTA, School Community Council and e-mailed newsletters. Within the past two months, information has been shared with students in some classes.

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

The mission statement is broad enough to encompass all that is within the school's DRSLs, which are that students will be able to "(1) effectively communicate to others

what they know and think, (2) demonstrate their understanding of content knowledge, and (3) become responsible citizens.” The first two DRSLs pertain to the statement on “academic success,” and the other one relates loosely to “fostering social and emotional growth.”

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

The school reports in its self-study that since the last accreditation visit there has been little work done in the teaching or assessment of the DRSLs. Much work has been directed toward increasing the lines of communication between school and home and with students. Students and parents have appreciated this work.

The lack of progress in institutionalizing any of the DRSLs is the result of many factors. Five years ago there was work being done in developing common assessments, but these were focused on “Power Standards” in concert with a vertical mapping project. As participants from the various schools changed, and as core curricula were revised, the momentum of assessment development was lost. Teachers have collaborated in developing formative assessments, and data is used among team members, but there is no collective way of assessing the DRSLs. The Visiting Team found evidence that in practice the DRSLs are indirectly taught in many classes, but they are not directly taught or referred to.

- 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?*

Most of the goals of the school reflect the stated mission to guide students to academic success and social/emotional growth. It is obvious that the faculty and staff at Brockbank Junior High are committed to helping students achieve academic success and become responsible citizens.

With that said, there was little evidence, at this time, that the DRSLs have any meaning outside of the work of accreditation. Both parents and students can present examples of instances in which teachers promote effective communicators or responsible citizenship when presented with the DRSLs, but most who were interviewed knew nothing about them. Teachers admitted that they are not explicitly teaching the DRSLs. The Visiting Team strongly recommends that the school work to make the DRSLs part of the language of the school, visible and understandable to stakeholders and explicitly taught and 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 curriculum in all classes is based on the State Core. Departments meet monthly to plan their curricula. It is apparent that some departments are departments that are stronger in this than others. The departments that are strong have developed a uniform curriculum that is similar in all teachers' classrooms. The driving force behind several of these departments is the common core and/or district mandates. The school has developed grade level teams in the seventh and eighth grades. Within most teams there is evidence that team members work collaboratively to develop cross-curricular activities and programs to serve individuals within the team. The school has developed a school-wide vocabulary list that helps students with terms that they will see throughout the year and on end-of-level tests. Every teacher posts the words of the week, and there are reminders of the vocabulary all over the school. The list is a collection of terms from every department.

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

Students indicated that they have opportunities to do inquiry-based learning through presentations, the use of technology or hands-on projects. They also indicated, however, that this happened approximately fifty percent of the time. The Visiting Team found students engaged in the activities or lessons in most of the classrooms.

The Visiting Team commends the faculty and administration for their dedication to providing students with a wide range of educational opportunities. The school has thriving fine and performing arts programs; students have the opportunity for exploratory classes; and, through the school's collaboration with the high school and the Granite Technical Institute, elective offerings for freshmen are expansive.

Much time and attention is given to both high-achieving and struggling students. The school has a respected program for gifted students. Regular and special educators collaborate through co-teaching and inclusionary teams to provide support and interventions. Most teams collaborate during team planning time to make accommodations for students.

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

Many teachers work within teams to identify the needs of students and collaborate for their success. There is an expectation that teams will have at least one cross-curricular project per quarter, and many of the teams go beyond that. Many teachers indicated that they do not explicitly teach the DRSLs, nor did they provide opportunities in the classroom to directly link the DRSLs to student assignments. When asked by members of the Visiting Team, students were able to look at a list of the DRSLs and give examples of how they did them in their classes (even though they didn't know what they were). Some examples given included the use of the My Access writing program in several classes to write essays. Students are taught how to take notes in their classes.

In math, students are required to apply previous knowledge to new problems. The students and administration also talked about the fitness center that is available during lunch to promote healthy lifestyles. Clearly, there is evidence that elements of the DRSLs exist within the school's curriculum, but that they are not explicitly taught, measured, or communicated.

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

In the past the staff spent a lot of time creating benchmark standards for their students. That effort fell to the wayside when the administration changed and other issues arose. Benchmark tests were not fully developed. Currently, teachers are using a variety of assessments: benchmark testing defined by district standards, as well as Acuity, SRI, and My Access. These assessments are intended to drive instruction and intervention. The school has used them to make placement decisions.

Teachers regularly adapt assessments to accommodate students. The Visiting Team found many examples of this.

The school's action plan does intend to focus on the development of common assessments. Starting with the seventh grade and moving into subsequent grades, the intention is to develop rubrics and formative assessments to inform students and parents of student progress and to inform instruction. The teachers feel that the time available does not allow for a full review of student performance data, and that professional development is needed to evaluate curricula and get rid of dated, irrelevant and ineffective assessments. There is not a lot of evidence that the data from these benchmarks guide the development of the curriculum.

Instruction:

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

The Visiting Team did observe a wide range of instructional strategies, given that teachers were preparing for end-of-year testing. Project-based learning, hands-on modeling, research and learning with technology, collaborative learning, and performance-based learning were some of the activities taking place. It is apparent that many teachers consider the diverse learning needs of young adolescents when designing lessons.

The focus group report did not directly address active engagement. The report did note that instructional time is protected, and it stated that teachers use effective classroom strategies to maximize learning time. However, it also stated that more needs to be done to assure that there is an alignment between instructional practice and essential goals. Given the block schedule, some concern was expressed by both teachers and

parents that time is not maximized for learning to the extent that it could be. Parents appreciate that students don't have a lot of homework, but is teaching and learning time lost in the trade-off? The student focus group asked for more learning experiences that require active engagement and the use of technology. The Visiting Team recommends that further study be given to the extent to which diverse instructional strategies are being employed on a routine basis, what impact they have on student learning, and to what extent time is maximized for continued learning.

- 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 school and staff have not developed strategies for instruction of the DRSLs. Teachers indicated that the students would have no idea what the DRSLs were and that very few of the students would even remember talking about them in advisory. When students were shown a list of the DRSLs, they were able to provide examples of what each would look like in their classrooms. The DRSLs themselves are not explicitly taught, but elements of the DRSLs are evident in the classrooms. The teachers recognize that there is a need to analyze and detail the data that is available and also that they need to create a tool to assess the DRSLs.

- 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 school's organizational system and culture are supportive of school improvement and professional development. Several years ago, the faculty and prior administration adopted a comprehensive school reform model focused on a three-pronged approach to school improvement that required the active involvement of faculty and staff in decision-making. As part of this work, a Teaching and Learning Committee is in charge of professional development for the school. Professional development focuses on the goals for school improvement. There is support for continuous learning, and teachers are encouraged to attend trainings and workshops. Teachers within teams and departments mentor and support one another in new learning. There have been workshops on literacy and the use of technology. Teachers have united in creating a single goal for individual professional growth plans. The Visiting Team commends this dedication to professional growth and recommends that, as the school moves forward with its action plan, sufficient time be dedicated for the training on rubrics, writing across the curriculum, and formative assessments.

- d) *To what extent are teachers proficient in their content area, knowledgeable about current research on effective instructional approaches, and reflective on their own practices?*

All of the teachers at Brockbank Junior High are highly qualified to teach in their content areas. The school has implemented a variety of programs based on current research in PLCs and middle-level reform. Teachers attend district trainings and other

professional development opportunities. It is evident in many departments that the teachers are looking within their department for ways to improve student learning. In the past there were strides made toward creating Power Standards, but many teachers have gotten away from the idea. The push now is to implement standards to assess 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?*

All of the teachers have a mounted LCD projector and use them in their lessons. The media specialist devotes a lot of time to looking for different resources on line that he shares with the teachers. He also provides training for the students if the teachers request it. There are several computer labs available, and they are utilized the majority of the time. There were classroom computers in many classrooms, but evidence of use was not seen. A group of teachers is being trained by Granite School District on the use of iPads in the classroom, and those teachers plan to use the iPads as much as they can in their classrooms. The hope is that they will be able to share ideas with their teams of teachers and that more people will be able to utilize the technology in their classes. CRTs are currently done online.

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?*

Brockbank was part of a progressive movement with elementary feeder schools and the area's high school to develop "Power Standards" defining what students needed to know and be able to do. The work resulted in a vertical alignment that informed instruction and was to be used to measure student progress. Unfortunately, before the work was fully implemented in classrooms, it was stalled due to Core Curriculum and staffing changes. The Visiting Team found evidence of the work in the posters in some classrooms and in hallways, but teachers admit that the momentum was lost.

The school's focus group reported that common assessments are used in reading, language arts, and mathematics. These formative and summative assessments are used to place students in programs for intervention and to inform instruction.

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

Teachers strive to assess and grade fairly. Collaboration in teams and departments supports this work. Most have been trained in SIOP and REACH, which emphasize feedback of student output as an important part of the learning process. While the

Visiting Team did not see much evidence of periodic assessments during lessons, it was apparent that academic expectations are articulated to both students and parents.

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

The faculty and administration use data to monitor student progress and to assist in program planning and adjustment. CRT data is shared with all teachers; as an example of its use to drive instruction, the faculty decided to focus on the development of academic language, which has resulted in every teacher putting emphasis on certain words weekly. The Visiting Team found evidence of student proficiency with vocabulary in a variety of settings, and commends the school for its work.

Teams use data on student learning to develop plans of intervention for students. Formative assessment data is used to determine what needs to be re-taught and which students need additional support. Teachers do admit, though, that not enough time is spent reviewing assessment data. The Visiting Team recommends that this work be part of the yearly schedule for collaboration.

- 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?*

Most teachers have been trained in SIOP, which has assessment as one of its central components. Several teachers have also been trained in the backwards design of curriculum, which starts by defining what students need to know and be able to do and then planning the lesson. Some work in designing common assessments has been part of some of the school's professional learning communities. Special education teachers work with their colleagues to provide accommodations in testing for students. During the visit it was clear to the Visiting Team that teachers will readily adapt assessments to meet the needs of students.

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

There is no organizational agreement on the use of a school-wide scoring tool to assess any of the DRSLs. It is the intention of the faculty and administration to start with the development of a pre-assessment of students' ability to effectively read expository text. The assessment, to be administered to seventh graders, is to be completed before the end of the current school year.

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 leadership promotes quality instruction through the processes of interdisciplinary teaming and department collaboration. The school's master schedule has been tailored to be sure this collaboration happens within the school work day. Teachers commend the administration for protecting instructional time from unnecessary interruptions. The focus on positive student behavior has also contributed to a school climate focused on teaching and learning.

- b) *To what extent does the school leadership employ effective decision making that is data-driven, research-based, and collaborative to monitor progress in student achievement and instructional effectiveness?*

The school leadership has taken great strides to incorporate research-based and collaborative decision-making. Evidence can be seen in the commitment to creating smaller learning communities through teaming in the seventh and eighth grades. Expectations for the teams have been established, and the Visiting Team recommends that the school consider an evaluation of its teaming with an emphasis on determining the impact of effective teaming and student achievement. Some changes may be needed to ensure that all teams are effective and every student has the benefit of that experience.

- 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?*

School-wide policies and operational procedures are consistent with the school's beliefs, mission and DRSLs, and are designed to maximize opportunities for student learning. Resources at the school have been allocated to provide a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment. The school administration and faculty have worked to secure numerous grants to support programs.

- 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?*

Most teachers in the school are members of a multi-disciplinary team, and all participate in departmental collaboration where they are focused on student learning. In addition, the school employs committees that are focused on specific aspects of the

school-wide decision-making process. Parents appreciate the “open door” policy of the administration and the responsiveness of the school counselors. Communication has been strengthened through weekly e-mail newsletters and updated teacher web pages, which has served to strengthen shared responsibility between home and school. Both the Parent/Teacher Association and the School Community Council are important venues for shared decision-making.

- 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 established a formal system through which each student has an adult staff member who knows him/her well and assists him/her through the advisory period. Students expressed this explicitly, and staff members also expressed their satisfaction with this program. The advisory period would be a wonderful place to share the mission and beliefs, as well as the desired results for student learning, and to outline the school’s plan for accomplishing these goals with every student.

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?*

While the administration and faculty do spend time reviewing data and engaging in dialogue to drive program and instructional changes, the work has not been driven by the school’s action plan. The work done six years ago for the Utah accreditation was sincere, but there was insufficient commitment to the plan. So, while the mission of the school was alive in the work of the administrators, teachers, and staff, competing factors detracted from accomplishment of the continuous improvement process as defined by the school in 2005.

- 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?*

It is clear to the Visiting Team that there is commitment to ongoing professional development; however, there does not appear to be a clear plan for professional development that moves participants along the continuum from learning to systematic implementation with visible results in the classroom. Those responsible for

professional development have done a credible job in trying to structure learning that is meaningful for the faculty, but in some cases it has been insufficient to provide teachers with the skills to competently implement the strategies in all classes. As an example of this, in the departmental reports only one department mentioned something about sharing strategies with colleagues; all of the other reports mentioned professional development that was important to the content area but ancillary to school goals. The early professional development on literacy that could be considered as central to the DRSLs was never fully implemented because the presentation was ill received. Elimination of the resources necessary to provide meaningful professional learning has also had a serious impact.

The Visiting Team commends the faculty for being responsible for the professional development in the school, and commends Principal Van Winkle's support for teachers' efforts. The Visiting Team recommends that a comprehensive plan be developed for professional development that not only extends teachers' knowledge and skills but clearly articulates the expectations for implementation and an assessment of its impact on teaching and learning. This is currently not part of the action plan, and without it school-wide improvement will be marginal.

- c) *To what extent is the new/revised school-wide action plan adequate in addressing the critical areas for follow-up and is there sufficient commitment to the action plan, school-wide and system-wide?*

The school-wide action plan as written is inadequate in that only the seventh grade was addressed. A verbal commitment of the department chairs was made that the other grade levels would be addressed in the near future. The Visiting Team recommends that the other grade levels be incorporated into the written plan as soon as possible.

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

The school recognizes the need for productive change and strives for continuous improvement. The faculty, administration, and staff show genuine concern for individual students as well as the school community as a whole. One way they support continuous improvement is through the shared team planning time and the utilization of weekly early release time. The Visiting Team is confident that the school will act upon the recommendations given in this report.

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

It is the opinion of the Visiting Team that the original action plan was not implemented. A new action plan has been developed, and implementation has begun. It will be important that the administration and faculty consider how the continuous improvement process will be implemented and monitored to ensure adherence to the plan.

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

There were four major recommendations from the previous Visiting Team. First, the team recommended that a comprehensive and embedded professional development plan be developed. This development was initiated but then abandoned after one year. Several teachers mentioned that a difficult experience with a district literacy training left a negative pall that derailed much further whole-school training in literacy. Some piecemeal efforts, led by faculty members, have been received successfully. Greater emphasis has been given to technology training and support for district and state training.

The second recommendation had reference to the assessment goal of the action plan, and the development of specific action steps concerning the design of common formative and summative assessments. The school is honest in its report that lack of continuity and insufficient time has led to little progress. Most of the progress made in this area is the result of the implementation of district benchmark tests in Core Curriculum areas.

The third recommendation was to improve communication with stakeholders. This is an area of significant improvement, with noted satisfaction on the part of teachers, parents and students. The one area still to be fully addressed is that of frequent updates of student data for parents and students; while most teachers are updating routinely, parents still express frustration with those who only do so on an infrequent basis.

The final recommendation was that the action plan include the specific people responsible for each step, and that measurable data be defined. With the development of the new plan, this recommendation has been taken into consideration. Assignments have been more clearly defined; however, there is still a need for the definition of measurable data.

CHAPTER 5: COMMUNITY BUILDING

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

It is the opinion of the Visiting Team that one of Brockbank's strengths is its community. Strong ties to the community have been built over the school's many years in service. Parents and students both expressed their sense of belonging to the school. They feel safe and as if they are part of a family. Parent expressed their appreciation of the counseling staff, teachers, and administrators and their efforts to make every student feel like a valued individual.

- 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 in the learning process through a variety of programs such as the PTA, electronic newsletters, SEOP conferences, team conferences, after-school tutoring, theatrical performances and many other programs and resources.

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

The students, faculty, staff and parents were involved with the climate surveys. They were also invited to be on the focus groups. The Visiting Team commends the school for the degree to which there was representation of parents and students in the process.

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

The focus groups were shown the testing results and the results of the surveys. The School Community Council receives information on a yearly basis. Information is also shared on the district website and in the weekly e-mail newsletter sent by the principal.

CHAPTER 6: MAJOR COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Commendations:

- The Visiting Team commends the school for the degree to which middle level philosophy is put into practice. The implementation of teaming to create smaller learning communities, the creation of exploratory classes to ignite students' curiosity and interest, and the establishment of an advisory period that has meaning to both students and teachers, has created a school that is highly valued in the community.
- The Visiting Team commends the administration, faculty and staff for the degree to which they have created an environment that values each student and supports his/her individual success. It is clear from the examination of programs and practices that the adults in the building want to foster students' strengths and support them in the development of skills, aptitudes and proficiencies that will lead to lifelong learning and success.
- The Visiting Team commends the administration for supporting broad-based decision-making in the school, and the faculty for its willingness not only to have a voice in

decisions but to take responsibility for actions. These efforts have resulted not only in a good place for students, but in a good place for the adults as well.

Recommendations:

- The Visiting Team strongly recommends that the school institutionalize at least one of the DRSLs through the explicit teaching and measuring of at least one in the next three years. This effort will require expansion of and adherence to the action plan.
- The Visiting Team recommends that a systematic review of the school data and progress of continuous improvement be conducted and result in yearly updates to the school self-study. Consideration should be given to convening the focus groups periodically to review data.
- The Visiting Team recommends that a review of teaming take place, to include team members' self-assessment and goal-setting with the administration to refresh their expectations; increase the degree to which teaming is having an impact on creating integrated, relevant learning experiences for students; and ensure that the quality experience that is afforded to students on effective teams is available to all students.
- Finally, the Visiting Team recommends that a comprehensive plan be developed for professional learning. This should be aligned to the school's action plan, with timelines established. Consideration must be given to a self-assessment, a focus on research-based practice, defined expectations for the implementation of the learning, support for implementation with peer-coaching and collaboration, and a means for evaluating progress.