

**The Report of the
Accreditation Visiting Team**

**Dixie High School
350 East 700 South
St. George, Utah 84770**

April 15-16, 2009



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**THE REPORT OF THE
VISITING TEAM REVIEWING**

**Dixie High School
350 East 700 South
St. George, Utah 84770**

April 15-16, 2009

UTAH STATE OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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State Superintendent of Public Instruction**

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Salt Lake City, Utah

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FOREWORD

The major purpose of the accreditation process is to stimulate school growth and improvement so as to increase student achievement.

In these efforts, the school staff makes a comprehensive evaluation of the school's programs, operations, and results. The school determines how actual practices align to stated objectives and resulting outcomes. It is a three-phased evaluation: (1) self-evaluation, (2) on-site evaluation by an external team of educators, and (3) implementation using units of the evaluation to improve the school by effecting thoughtful change.

The evaluation, April 15-16, 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 Dixie 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 Larry Bergeson is also commended.

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

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

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DIXIE HIGH SCHOOL
ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF

School Administration

Larry G. Bergeson..... Principal
Sharla Campbell..... Assistant Principal
Michael Bair..... Assistant Principal

Counseling

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Marsha Bowler..... Counselor
Lisa Mitchell..... Counselor
Glenn Mesa Counselor

Support Staff

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Alicia Gull..... Attendance Secretary
Patti Harris Finance Secretary
Kristen Lewis Registrar
Sophia Ford..... Secretary
Susan Walker Athletic, Reception Secretary
Shirl Robinson Head Custodian
Ricky Fritts, Jan Squire, Joy Cary, Karolyn Davis, Guadalupe Castro, Rosario
Hernandez, Ken Horner, Ron Stucki Custodians
Michelle McArthur, Jan Demas, Wendy Heaps, Kristen Brinkerhoff..... Lunch
Jan Bowles, Cynthia Klumpp Media Aides
Tyler Lewis Cone Site Technology Coordinator
Anthony Wilcox..... Resource Officer

Faculty

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Kori Bowler	Ryan Cuff	David Gust
Nathan Bowler	Mark Dickson	Jeanne Hansen
Jason Brooks	Cody DuPass	Mark Heppler
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Will Stucki
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Gerald Thomas
Colette Varley
Karl Wegkamp
Dan Westwood
Glenn Whicker
Launa Williams
Renton Williams

DIXIE HIGH SCHOOL

MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission at Dixie High School is to develop capable, caring, contributing citizens who exemplify the school's historic motto: "Pace deo a posse ad esse"—from possibility to reality.

BELIEF STATEMENTS

At Dixie High School we believe:

1. Each student is a valued individual with unique physical, social and intellectual needs.
2. All students can learn.
3. Student learning is the chief priority for the school.
4. A safe and physically comfortable environment promotes student learning.
5. Positive relationships and mutual respect among students and staff promote learning.
6. Student learns in different ways; therefore, curriculum and instructional practices should incorporate a variety of learning activities to accommodate difference in learning styles.
7. Students need to apply their learning in meaningful contexts.
8. Students learn best when they are actively engaged in the learning process and are required to produce quality work.
9. Utah State Core Standards should provide the basis for the guaranteed curriculum in each content area.
10. Assessments of student learning should provide students with a variety of opportunities to demonstrate their achievement of the expectations of learning.
11. Cultural diversity can increase students' understanding of different peoples and cultures and help prepare them to interact in a global environment.
12. Schools should promote an environment where all stakeholders work and learn together and are mutually accountable for high levels of performance.

13. Schools should be committed to developing and maintaining a culture of continuous improvement.
14. Teachers, administrators, parents, students, and the community share the responsibility for advancing the school's mission.

DESIRED RESULTS FOR STUDENT LEARNING (DRSLs)

1. Basic Skills
 - Select, Plan, organize ideas to communicate clearly through a variety of methods (e.g., written, verbal, mathematical)
 - Use appropriate technology in ethical ways
 - Engage in activities of aesthetic expression and personal growth
 - Build habits to promote lifelong health and fitness
2. Complex Thinking
 - Solve problems in diverse ways
 - Apply higher-order thinking skills in a variety of contexts
3. Responsible Citizenship
 - Value self and others
 - Participate in school and community democratic processes
 - Use effective interpersonal skills
 - Appreciate diversity as a basis for participating in our global environment
 - Work cooperatively with others and contribute to group goals
 - Establish and maintain an educational plan that maximizes career choice

Date of visit: April 15-16, 2009

MEMBERS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Daniel N. Johnson, Secondary Education Director, Tooele County School District, Visiting Team Chairperson

Suzy Hodson, Canyon View High School, Iron County School District

Georgia Loutensock, Specialist, Utah State Office of Education

Jill Shirts, Canyon View High School, Iron County School District

E. Stewart Shaver, Cedar Ridge High School, Sevier County School District

VISITING TEAM REPORT

DIXIE HIGH SCHOOL

CHAPTER 1: SCHOOL PROFILE

Dixie High School dates back to 1911, when it was founded as the St. George Academy by the LDS Church and was housed at Tabernacle and Main. It was a private religious school open to the public, and coexisted in the same building with the Normal College, which was established in 1918. In 1963 Dixie College was created and moved to its own facilities. Dixie High moved to a new building located at 350 East 700 South in 1966. The school has remained at this site and has undergone many changes and upgrades. The most recent building project was in 2004, when a multilevel facility was built. The structure houses a comprehensive program of curriculum options and activities for over 1,000 students in grades 10-12.

Dixie High School has a unique history and is characterized by strong traditions. Students, staff and the community are proud of this school and share a common interest in maintaining and embracing “Dixie Pride.”

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

Dixie High has seen several shifts in its student demographics over the last few years. The most significant change has occurred in the Hispanic student population, which has increased from 6.8 percent in 2003 to 10.8 percent in 2008. One hundred sixty-four students, or 16 percent of the student body, qualify for fee waivers.

Dixie High experienced rapid growth from 990 students in 2003-2004 to a high of 1,304 students in 2006-2007. For the current school year, 2008-2009, the school saw a decrease of almost 300 students with the opening of a new high school and resulting boundary changes. Dixie High expects some decreased enrollments for the next school year and possibly longer.

Dixie High School has identified variations in CRT performance between males and females. The school has adjusted curriculum and instructional engagement to address this need, and added interventions as a way of providing assistance to all students. There has been evidence of improvement over recent years as indicated by data provided in the school profile.

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

The school profile was extremely well done. No future modifications are recommended. The school needs to respond appropriately as its demographics change in the next few years.

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

The Visiting Team was impressed with the quality of the self-study and the congruence that existed between what was discovered and the actions which were proposed and taken by Dixie High School.

Suggested Areas for Further Inquiry:

- Continue to monitor the effect of interventions on the achievement of those students who participate in them. This will address the school's stated concern: "What will we do when the students don't learn?"
- Begin now to identify the research-based programs and practices that will best meet the needs of immigrant students such as the school's growing Latino population.

**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?*

Dixie High's mission statement, beliefs and DRSLs were the result of a collaborative effort of the school community. All stakeholders were involved at various times.

The mission statement was revisited, and an examination found that it is still relevant and continues to guide the school's programs and policies.

Dixie High School's belief statements have been revised to reflect the school's current work with professional learning communities (PLCs) and efforts to implement best practices. The changes were made through the focus groups and incorporated suggestions from teachers, administrators, parents, and

representatives of higher education. The revised belief statements “represent the core beliefs that are reflected in the activities, classrooms and culture of Dixie High School.”

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

The mission and beliefs of Dixie High School are the foundation for the school's DRSLs. The DRSLs are an extension of the mission and beliefs, expanding them into the culture and curriculum of the school.

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

Dixie High has chosen to institutionalize a “writing across the curriculum” program that is now part of every classroom. Begun in 2004, this writing project is now embedded into all classes and curricula. Every class has a minimum of one writing assignment per term. The school has developed “The Big Three” rubric as an assessment for writing based on three criteria: conventions, organization and content. The rubric is used by teachers outside the Language Arts department which use the Six Traits of Writing rubric. Teachers keep their own collection of student writing as an aid for assessment.

Teachers from various content areas have seen benefits from the inclusion of writing in their curriculum. For example, “The most noticeable benefit from the infusion of additional writing/composition activities is that the participating students are forced to employ the higher level learning and thinking skills.” “The writing samples have been effective in my classes. It was fun to hear students say, ‘This is not English class.’ My response to them was that writing is incorporated into everything we do...”

- 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?*

As stated above, Dixie High School's mission, beliefs and DRSLs are the foundation of the school. The mission embraces the history of the school, while the beliefs and DRSLs broaden the mission and reach into the future. Dixie High has integrated the mission, beliefs and DRSLs into the very fabric of the school. The Visiting Team saw evidence on every hand that the culture of Dixie High is based on its mission, beliefs 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 Visiting Team saw evidence of collaborative efforts to ensure that the curriculum is based on the Utah Core Curriculum and reflects the Life Skills. Most departments have created curriculum maps and Power Standards for each course taught. However, many departments recognize the need to improve especially in “providing opportunities for students to explore applications of their learning beyond essential knowledge and skills.”

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

The Visiting Team saw numerous examples of teachers and students engaged in inquiry, problem solving and higher-order thinking skills in a variety of content areas. Departments report that there is an ongoing process in place to evaluate the curriculum to meet the needs of all 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?*

Dixie High has built a culture of collaboration within the teaching staff. The school community has worked together to integrate the DRSLs into all curricular areas. The writing across the curriculum is now well embedded in all areas, and the school is looking to developing additional ways to include other DRSL areas in each content area, as well as developing how to measure student success in those areas.

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

Dixie High has used assessments to differentiate curricula and provide programs to ensure student success. Rebound is an example of this effort. Rebound is a weekly assessment of student progress in which a student is referred to meet with the classroom teacher(s) for courses in which the student needs help or is behind in assignments. The school has also developed an intervention plan for students who need help and an enrichment plan for students who may need or desire additional challenges.

Instruction:

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

Through classroom visits, it became apparent to the Visiting Team that the teachers use a variety of instructional strategies to enhance student learning. In addition to direct instruction, the team saw teachers modeling processes, facilitating independent student work, overseeing lab exercises, using interactive white boards, and facilitating student collaborative learning activities. Students were also working independently on worksheets, giving oral presentations, and demonstrating learning with the help of sophisticated technological tools. Teachers keep students involved by using activities such as writing, listening, group discussion, student presentations, memorization, and hands-on activities.

- 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 DRSLs are displayed in every class. Teachers were observed teaching lessons developed around the State Core Curriculum, district Power Standards, and school DRSLs. The Visiting Team observed teachers explicitly teaching objectives that tie to the school 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?*

Identifying instructional needs through the STAR Reading Test, CRTs, Holt, Rinehart, and Winston entry-level and end-of-level standards based tests, and Direct Writing Assessment is important to the Dixie High faculty. Faculty members are working hard to develop and improve their instructional strategies. They are developing professional learning communities in the school. Teachers also participate in learning walks where they have the opportunity to observe other teachers in their school. The Visiting Team feels that learning walks have been helpful to teachers in improving instruction. Teachers were able to observe best practices and gather a variety of instructional strategies for use in their own classrooms. Teachers also demonstrated greater appreciation for their colleagues.

It was the observation of the Visiting Team that the staff members have been trained on the initiatives they have been asked to implement.

- 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?*

Overall, teachers are proficient in their content. The Visiting Team was impressed with the expertise teachers demonstrated in their classrooms. The Clothing I teacher demonstrated her knowledge by being able to keep 28 students busy with only 15 sewing machines. She requires a crochet project for each student so that

students always have something they can do. The Woods teacher is able to keep a beginning class together on a nightstand project by providing faster students with the opportunity to make toys to donate. The Welding teacher has created a project where students make their own small barbeque grills. The United States History II teacher had students creating children's books and presenting them to the class. Teachers at Dixie High use a wide variety of instructional strategies. The common thread is that all are high-student-interest activities that engage students in learning required concepts.

- 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 observed computer technology being used throughout the school. Projectors and Smart Boards are available to teachers and students. Students were observed using technology as a vehicle for their learning.

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?*

Individual departments within Dixie High have focused on developing and implementing common assessments based on the State Core standards and the school's Power Standards. Common assessments are used at least four times per year. The standard being taught is displayed in each classroom and is specifically referenced in order to reinforce the connection between the lesson and the goal concept. Expectations for student achievement are communicated to the students in each specific class/subject.

- 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 school uses teacher-generated assessments, benchmark testing and end-of-level testing to assess school-wide and individual progress. These assessments provide information on learning in relation to academic expectations provided by the Core Curriculum and school Power Standards. Both teachers and students feel the school is successful in providing material to be assessed beforehand.

The Visiting Team agrees with the improvement plan that parental access to content material should be increased.

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

In order to assess the success of the school in achieving academic expectations, data from CRTs is used to identify achievement levels of individual students as well as the school as a whole. All departments meet to analyze the data and adjust instruction as necessary. In addition, the counselors provide interests assessment which aids on correct student placement.

- 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?*

The Visiting Team noted that departments meet as professional learning communities to collaborate on instructional and assessment strategies. This is an ongoing process that will increase in effectiveness as it develops. On a more informal level, teachers participate in "walk-arounds" to observe other teaching strategies used throughout the school.

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

Teachers at Dixie High have created a school-wide rubric that is used to assess their writing DRSL. Individual departments have adjusted the rubric as necessary to fit their curricula. Teachers and students indicate that the rubric is given to students before assessment takes place. The Visiting Team encourages the continued use of the rubrics, particularly sharing within departments to increase reliability.

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?*

Dixie High School has spent a great deal of time and energy on learning about and implementing research-based teaching and learning practices. The staff participates in comprehensive school-based and district-wide professional development. The implementation of professional learning communities (PLCs) is a strong indicator of the leadership's commitment to a culture of learning for all.

- 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?*

As indicated in the school profile, the school leadership did an effective review of data to inform themselves of areas of strength and weakness in the school. Teacher leadership was used to review this data and to cooperatively create and implement research-based strategies to address the identified critical needs. The school has created ways for teachers to frequently review data and to monitor the progress of students within departments and across the school.

- 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 school leadership fully understands its responsibility to build sustainability across the school. It has effectively managed resources so that the training needs of staff are being addressed and allocations of learning materials and tools are effective. The leadership has built “expertise” among the staff and delegated responsibility to teacher leaders so that appropriate data interpretation and informed instruction occurs at the school. The Visiting Team felt that the leadership was well trained and intent upon using best practices to ensure that the school goals and DRSLs are aligned and met.

- 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?*

School leadership at Dixie High School includes the administration, teachers, students, and parents. The school improvement plan is well known, and strategies for attaining the goals within it are met through a collaborative decision-making process. The Visiting Team was impressed with the students’ knowledge of their responsibility in the learning process and with the teachers’ ability to engage them in it. This is an area where Dixie High School should be proud. The school has established a sense of “how we do business every day.” This is a powerful school environment issue that needs continued nurturing.

- 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 professional learning communities established at Dixie High School use multiple sources of data, and this greatly enhances the school’s effort to have an adult engaged in the students’ personal learning. The interventions at the school and the multiple opportunities for students to participate in sports and extracurricular activities provide excellent opportunities for student and adult interaction. The students remarked many times to the Visiting Team how much they felt the staff cared about them and their well being. There is a sense at the school that students come first.

School Services:

This standard is dealt with in the school's NAAS Annual Report, which requires specific responses and information regarding student support services, guidance services, health services, library information services, special education services, and family and community services.

Facilities and Finances:

This standard is addressed in the school's annual report to NAAS, which requires specific responses regarding the physical plant, finances, audit of school records, advertising, etc.

CHAPTER 4: NAAS SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT STANDARD

Culture of Continual Improvement:

- a) *To what extent has the school developed and implemented a comprehensive school improvement plan using Collaborating for Student Achievement, the Utah accreditation/school improvement process that is reviewed and revised on an ongoing basis?*

This was fully met by Dixie High School. The administration and site leadership team did an excellent job of following the model and developing a plan based upon the findings in the self-study. This school is to be commended for its understanding of the process and fidelity to all phases of the study.

- 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 administration and site leadership team have attended formal training on the accreditation process and built capacity within the school before and during the process. Based on the findings, the school leadership identified areas of weakness and the corresponding training that would be required to enable staff to adequately address the issues. This was done through school based and district-wide professional development programs. The assignment of a "staff developer" for the school, along with the expertise of administration and teacher leaders, assured the success of school reform at Dixie High School.

- 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 is in total agreement that commitment and capacity exists at the school to carry through with the plans that have been made. Confidence was expressed by teachers and by the various focus groups that they believe the school's goals will be accomplished. The school improvement plan is solidly connected to the self-study and provides the necessary guidance for future school reform.

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

It was observed by the Visiting Team that conditions for change were prevalent in the school. This was revealed through interviews with administration, teachers, students, and various study groups. An environment has been created where stakeholders hold an interest in the future and they accept their responsibility for making appropriate change happen.

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

The school has continued on from its last study by taking those earlier recommendations seriously and by implementing some new goals and strategies. For example, the school has refined its data collection and reporting, increased the capacity of staff to take responsibility for student learning, created structure and opportunity for collaboration, and provided new training and tools that have enabled the staff members to more effectively do their work. Again, Dixie High School has been very effective in implementing change that focuses on student achievement.

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

Each one of the recommendations from the previous study was effectively addressed. Of particular note was the school-wide implementation and assessment of the Communication DRSL. This is a significant achievement and sets the stage for other DRSLs to be implemented in the next few years.

CHAPTER 5: COMMUNITY BUILDING

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

The school holds a meeting once a month with the Community Council to discuss the direction in which the school is headed. The school relies heavily on parental feedback in planning activities and support groups for the various clubs, athletic teams, and class activities and programs. One parent, when asked why she participated on the Community Council, stated that she felt like she didn't know how better to support her children than by being an active part of the Community Council—it helped her kids to be better students, knowing that she was there to support them at this time in their lives.

The faculty members expressed their appreciation for the number of parents who did actually show up to support school activities. They felt that it took a load off their minds to have such great parental support.

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

The committee felt they had a role in extending the sense tradition that the school and community so fully feels involved in. Parents help with the different activities that have promoted tradition for all these years. (As a side note, the students feel this same desire to promote school tradition.)

The Visiting Team noticed that the school leadership and committees need to better communicate with the parents in the community. The Hispanic community parents have not been as active in school/community projects and activities as they could be. The leadership admits that there might be a language and cultural stumbling block, but they are desirous of surmounting this issue. The school is looking for ways to better communicate with all groups so that they might feel a greater desire to participate.

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

The accreditation process was closely followed, allowing for the involvement of students, parents and community members. The school staff expressed an interest in having parents involved and used their input from surveys and other forms of feedback as they developed their school improvement plan. It was noted by the Visiting Team that student learning was central to all of these efforts.

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

Dixie High School is making good use of several forms of communication. Some are face to face, some written, and others electronic. The school has an excellent web page and a Student Information System (SIS) that, once fully implemented, will allow for newer forms of communication such as Email Alerts. There is an interest on the part of leadership in pursuing as many means as possible to improve communication, especially in the area of reporting student achievement on a timely basis.

CHAPTER 6: MAJOR COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Commendations:

- The Visiting Team commends the feeling of “Dixie Spirit and Dixie Pride” that was noticed by all members of the Visiting Team. The school’s historical roots provide a solid foundation and help to create a sense of belonging to everyone at the school.
- The school facility is beautiful and a source of pride for the students and the community. The custodial staff and all who use the building are to be commended for the outstanding job they have done in keeping it clean and ready for student use. The Visiting Team noted that the cleanliness and sense of order made the school feel safe and Dixie High School is a place of learning.
- The Visiting Team commends the emphasis Dixie High has placed on the DRSLs. The DRSLs are posted in the school and are generally well known. The writing/communication DRSL has become institutionalized and is being assessed across the school.
- The Visiting Team commends the professional development program at Dixie High. The program is strong and promotes research-based practices that have been proven to be effective in improving student achievement. The Visiting Team saw numerous examples of teachers using best practices and opportunities for them to reflect upon their work in collaborative settings.
- The Visiting Team commends the school’s remarkable effort to engage students. There was much evidence that higher-order thinking is promoted at Dixie High School.
- The Visiting Team commends the interventions developed and used at Dixie High. The school has implemented powerful intervention strategies to help students learn. This commitment is indicative of the school’s focus: What do we

want students to learn? How will we know when they have learned it? What will we do when they don't?

- The students have a number of activities and sports to supplement a rich curriculum. There is a sincere effort to meet the needs and interest of a fairly diverse student body.
- The integration of technology into the curriculum provides students the opportunity to develop skills necessary for entering the 21st century. The Visiting Team observed several staff members using technology tools to enhance student learning and assessment.

Recommendations:

- The Visiting Team recommends that Dixie High School stay focused on student achievement data in order to effectively monitor the progress already being made. It is recommended that the school look for electronic methods of collecting and reporting data so that all concerned can be well informed. Consolidation of data on individual students will make decisions much easier for staff members as they work in collaborative settings.
- The Visiting Team recommends that Dixie High continue the implementation and refinement of professional learning communities. This will have the most far-reaching effect of any of the school improvement goals that the school has identified. Promoting PLCs that are student oriented will improve achievement and foster the concept of having an adult in every student's life.
- Communication at the school is very good, and the Visiting Team recognized the school's expressed need to focus on this important area for school improvement in the future. The school is encouraged to develop plans for outreach to specific community subgroups.
- The Visiting Team recommends that the school expand the emphasis on cross-curricular instruction. Students need to see the interrelatedness of the subjects they study on a daily basis. This will require professional development and some adjustments in the way in which various departments communicate with one another.
- The Visiting Team recommends that Dixie High develop implementation teams so that each goal in the school improvement plan has a group with oversight responsibilities. This will ensure fidelity to the plan and progress monitoring, and will ultimately increase the rate at which goals are achieved.