

P.O. Box 330 Duchesne, Utah 84021

April 29, 2008





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

Duchesne High School P.O. Box 330 Duchesne, UT 84021

April 29, 2008

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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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 29, 2008, 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 Duchesne 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 Stan Young is also commended.

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

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

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DUCHESNE HIGH SCHOOL

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School Administration

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John Foster Assis	tant Principal

Counseling

Support Staff

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Don Hill	Merrilli Mckee	_

DUCHESNE HIGH SCHOOL

MISSION STATEMENT

We, the Duchesne High School community, are dedicated to the principles of respect, responsibility, and life-long learning; to an environment that supports educational and personal experience; and to the development of the skill necessary for acquiring knowledge and using it wisely. This is the Eagle Way. We achieve this mission by focusing on the following:

<u>Areas of Emphasis</u> <u>Community Values</u>

Students Caring
Curriculum Trust

Instruction Responsibility

Activities Respect
Community Family
Communication Integrity

Teachers/Staff Accountability

BELIEF STATEMENTS

At Duchesne High School We Believe:

- Student learning is our first priority.
- All Students and teachers can learn.
- We maintain a safe and appealing learning environment.
- Teachers make a positive difference in students' lives.
- We make accommodations for different learning styles.
- All school participants should show mutual respect for each other.
- Students need skills for lifelong learning.
- The responsibility for student education is shared among parents, teachers, students, and community.
- We strive for continuous improvement.
- It is important to offer a variety of opportunities for participation.
- Schools can and should teach values, standards, and ethics.

- A broad range of assessment practices is utilized.
- Student achievement and excellence is recognized and rewarded.

DESIRED RESULTS FOR STUDENT LEARNING (DRSLs)

- 1. Responsible Citizenship
- 2. Lifelong Learning
- 3. Effective Communication
- 4. Employability
- 5. Personal Growth and Character Development

Date of visit: April 29, 2008

MEMBERS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Ben Lems, Mount Jordan Middle School, Jordan School District, Visiting Team Chairperson

Marsha Forsgren, Uintah High School, Uintah School District

Mary Moulton, Uintah High School, Uintah School District

VISITING TEAM REPORT

DUCHESNE HIGH SCHOOL

CHAPTER 1: SCHOOL PROFILE

Duchesne High School is located in Duchesne, Utah. Duchesne is a rural town of about 1800 residents. The primary industries are agriculture and oil exploration and production. The first public school in Duchesne was held in a tent in 1905 with a population of 10 students. Today, Duchesne High School is housed in a modern building constructed in 2003 with a population of 328 students.

Enrollment at Duchesne High School has remained fairly stable over the past five years, with a slight increase in the last two years. The school has a minority population of 4.3 percent, 29.5 percent of students qualify for free or reduced-price lunch, and students with disabilities account for 11 percent of the total student population. Duchesne High School has a relatively young staff of 20 certified teachers. Of the 20 certified staff members, 11 have taught 10 years or less. Four staff members have master's degrees.

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

The majority of the school's self-study addresses the desired results for student learning (DRSLs). The school's focus group work, departmental analyses, and action plans are all directly related to the DRSLs. The DRSLs correspond closely to the USOE's Life Skills document.

The Visiting Team commends the school for developing and implementing a rubric for assessing the DRSLs. The Visiting Team recommends that the school continue to refine this rubric and gather evidence that connects the needs and goals of the school to the action plan.

Although a substantial amount of data is included in the school's self-study, little analysis of that data is included. In addition, connection between the data included in the self-study and DRSLs and the action plan is weak.

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

The school's mission statement is generally a restatement of the school's desired results for student learning. The Visiting Team recommends that the school consider restating its mission statement in a more clear, concise, and succinct manner. The mission statement should reflect a collective vision that focuses on the role the school must assume in shaping the future and providing educational opportunities for all students.

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

Focus groups and departments evaluated their programs based on the school's desired results for student learning, and identified strengths and areas of concern that needed to be addressed by each group or department.

Suggested Areas for Further Inquiry:

- The Visiting Team recommends that the staff of Duchesne High School systematically continue to collect and analyze pertinent student data to guide decisions made by the school and make connections to the school's action plan.
- The Visiting Team recommends that the school design an effective data management system that extends to disaggregating data by content area, student group, gender, grade level, and ethnicity, and include an analysis of that disaggregated data in the self-study.

CHAPTER 2: NORTHWEST ASSOCIATION OF ACCREDITED SCHOOLS (NAAS) TEACHING AND LEARNING STANDARDS

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

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

The school leadership team made an effort to include all stakeholders in the development of the school's mission, beliefs, and DRSLs. Parental involvement came primarily through the School Community Council. Student involvement was limited. Most of the work was done by the administration and staff.

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

The school's mission and beliefs are basically a restatement of the school's DRSLs. The alignment of the school's mission and belief statements seems to address the key issues of the school and to have some impact on the school's policies and decision making.

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

The school's DRSLs are based on the "Life Skills" document from the State Office of Education. The school has developed and recently implemented a rubric for assessing the DRSLs. The rubric examines four or five indicators for each of the school's five DRSLs. These indicators include:

1. Responsible Citizenship

- Demonstrates positive role within community
- Uses appropriate social skills
- Participates in civic activities
- Understands democratic principles

2. Lifelong Learning

- Learns to manage information to make informed decisions
- Initiates own learning
- Reads to obtain information and for enjoyment
- Demonstrates positive learning habits
- Demonstrates mathematical competency

3. Effective Communication

- Has developed a high standard of literacy
- Utilizes good writing and speaking skills
- Uses appropriate methods to communicate
- Responds appropriately to communication

4. Employability

- Is prepared for post-high school education and experiences
- Understands need for continued formal and informal education
- Has acquired skills and is literate in current technology
- Understands components of a strong work ethic
- Chooses and prepares for a career

5. Personal Growth and Character Development

- Demonstrates and recognizes the value of others
- Demonstrates honesty, integrity, responsibility, and ethical behavior
- Understands and applies principles of wellness
- Collaborates effectively and fluently with others
- d) To what extent do the school's mission, beliefs, and DRSLs guide the procedures, policies and decisions of the school, and appear evident in the culture of the school?

The Visiting Team found that the school is using the concepts contained within the school's beliefs and DRSLs to guide polices and procedures. However, there is some concern that the school's beliefs and DRSLs are not widely known among students and parents in general. The Visiting Team recommends that the school implement procedures to involve all stakeholders in understanding and using the school's mission, beliefs, and DRSLs in all decisions at all levels.

Curriculum:

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

The staff expressed a desire to have teachers of similar classes and/or from similar departments coordinate curricula so that the same concepts will be covered in all classes. This coordination would also allow and encourage sharing strategies to best teach these concepts. Teachers also expressed a desire for inter and intra collaboration time. This process will help aid and encourage cross-curricular collaboration and projects.

As improved data emerges, curriculum teams need to closely analyze and clarify the disaggregated data to learn who is learning and who needs additional help. With this knowledge, modifications in the curriculum can be made. This could be helpful as the staff continues working toward aligning State Core standards with class standards.

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

The Visiting Team observed that, while most students were engaged in inquiry, problem-solving, and higher-order thinking skills, teachers need to continue to devise instructional practices that involve 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?

Although the Duchesne High School staff engages in informal collaboration within departments and across the curriculum, there needs to be a more formal commitment in planning classroom and cross-curricular instruction.

Evidence of integrating the DRSLs was not clearly evident. Teachers need to develop a curriculum that focuses on the DRSLs within the current framework of each subject area.

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

Duchesne High School needs to develop common assessments with clear indicators to drive curriculum and to ensure that all students have met the desired learning outcomes.

Instruction:

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

The Visiting Team observed varied instructional strategies. It is also evident that the design and selection of instructional strategies and learning is aligned with the curriculum goals, including the State Core Curriculum. The Visiting Team observed that the students were actively engaged in the learning process.

Department chairs stated that they meet on an informal basis to coordinate curricula and activities within their departments. Emergence of cross-curricular collaboration is evident within some departments, while other departments are still in the planning stages of developing cross-curricular instruction that will enhance student 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 Visiting Team saw no evidence of the explicit teaching of the identified DRSLs. However, DRSLs were often implied during the course of instruction. The Visiting Team recommends that teachers incorporate the DRSLs into their lesson plans.

c) To what extent is the school's professional development program guided by identified instructional needs, and how does it provide opportunities for teachers to develop and improve their instructional strategies that support student learning?

The Visiting Team commends Duchesne High School for their efforts to train all teachers in Six Traits of Writing and technology to support student learning. Duchesne High School needs to make more effective use of data that identifies instructional needs to enhance professional development opportunities.

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 recognizes that in a rural school setting teachers must be proficient in more than one subject area. While most teachers are knowledgeable in their main subject area, all teachers must continue to research and implement effective instructional approaches in all classes. Furthermore, each teacher must continue to assess his/her own best practices and then adjust his/her instructional practices to reflect current trends.

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

Duchesne High School is commended for its focus on integrating technology into all classrooms. The Visiting Team observed that teachers have been well trained in the use technological advances that affect student 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?

While the Visiting Team recognizes the efforts of Duchesne High School to develop rubrics that address the DRSLs, these rubrics need to be refined and include measurable indicators for student achievement and expectations. The rubrics should clearly indicate student progress by defining specific benchmarks.

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 majority of students and teachers believe that assessment at Duchesne High School is given and graded in an unbiased and equitable manner. The Visiting Team believes that, as teachers are trained in creating better and more varied forms of assessment and there is focus on using rubrics for assessing achievement, even more students will be able to effectively assess their own learning.

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

Duchesne High School needs to continue to assess the data collected to assess the success of the school. Data should be assessed and interpreted to determine whether academic expectations are being met.

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?

There is a need for more teacher training focused on analyzing both classroom assessments and standardized assessments to improve methods to effectively measure what is taught. Also, there is a need for training on multiple assessment techniques based upon the type of learning to be assessed and the type of learners to be assessed. Many teachers indicated that they need time to collaborate, reflect, and develop a means for student assessment. The Visiting Team commends Duchesne High School for having students process and reflect upon their learning and be responsible for learning outcomes.

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

Duchesne High School has developed common rubrics to assess the DRSLs; however, these rubrics need to be reworked to include benchmarks that reflect common assessment and student achievement.

CHAPTER 3: NAAS SUPPORT STANDARDS

Leadership and Organization:

a) To what extent does the school leadership promote quality instruction by fostering an academic learning climate that actively supports teaching and learning?

The school leadership team is comprised primarily of the school principal and the counselor. The school's Community Council also plays a significant role in the decision-making process at the school.

Teachers indicated during interviews that the leadership of the school was interested in how the students were doing. The principal attempts to visit every classroom every day. Many teachers felt that the leadership team was genuinely interested in establishing a climate that fosters teaching and learning. The principal indicated a strong desire to listen to teachers and develop plans that address their concerns. Students stated that the principal and the school counselor are concerned about their personal and educational needs. Furthermore, the staff noted that the administration did what it could to provide instructional staff members with the resources and equipment they needed for effective instruction.

- 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's leadership reviews data generated by the Iowa, ACT, UBSCT, CRTs, and other assessments and surveys to make decisions at the school. The principal consults with those who have a stake in the decision to be made for their input whenever possible. The Visiting Team recommends that the school continue to involve all stakeholders in the decision-making process.
- c) To what extent does the leadership provide skillful stewardship by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and allocation and use of resources at the school for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment which aligns with the school goals, DRSLs, and school improvement?
 - The leadership at Duchesne High School has developed a school with a safe and orderly environment. The environment in the school makes it possible for effective teaching and learning to take place.
- 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?
 - Although it has been difficult to involve students and parents in general in the decision-making process, the principal and leadership team of the school have provided opportunities for all stakeholders to have input on decisions made by the school. The school's Community Council is active and is a valuable resource for the school. All major decisions affecting the school are discussed with the Community Council before being implemented.
- 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?
 - During interviews, students expressed feeling comfortable with the idea of going to any member of the staff for help if necessary. They would not hesitate to go to the principal or any other member of the staff with a problem. Students indicated that the counselor at Duchesne High School was very helpful.

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?
 - The Visiting Team found evidence that the school-wide improvement plan is being implemented in most classrooms. Teachers are continuing to find new ways to improve student learning.
- b) To what extent does the school build skills and the capacity for improvement through an aligned and ongoing professional development plan focused on the school's goals for improvement?
 - The Visiting Team found the Duchesne High School staff, and administration to be committed to school improvement and professional development. Faculty meetings are held regularly and often include time for professional development. The staff has received training in the use of UTIPS, Cognos, Pioneer Library, and Power-Grade, as well as word processors and data sheets. Teachers have also received e-MINTS training to become more proficient in the use of technology in the classroom. Staff members have the opportunity to go to workshops, conferences, and seminars to learn skills and strategies that are then shared with the entire staff.
- 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 staff members have been continually monitoring and evaluating their action plans since their last accreditation visit. Changes and modifications have been made when needed. The staff views the action plan as a "work in progress" and

expressed a commitment to continue to involve all stakeholders in the implementation and evaluation of the action plan.

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

The Visiting Team observed a commitment among the staff of Duchesne High School in support of continuous change and improvement. Many staff members stated that they feel supported and empowered by the administration to pursue positive change in their classrooms and in the school as a whole. There appears to be a strong desire to do what is best for students.

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

The school has made good progress in each of its action plans. For example, the staff received training on the Six Traits of Writing method and adopted it as a daily routine and part of a writing component in every classroom. Results of the school's Direct Writing Assessment show a gradual increase in most areas of the assessment. To help improve reading skills, students are given 15 minutes of free reading time every day. Reading scores also appear to be on the incline. The school has implemented a remediation program for junior high students who fail history, math, science, or English. A planning team comprised of staff members evaluates the student's progress over the course of the year and determine how best to help him or her. After-school tutoring and make-up sessions, along with counseling, are offered to the student. To help students develop a sense of community, a government course has been added to the curriculum that includes lessons in civics. Students are also encouraged to participate in school and community service projects. Finally, the school spent two years aligning courses and lesson plans with the State Core. Each teacher had to have the principal verify that his/her lesson plans met the requirements of the State Core.

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

The school has addressed each of the major recommendation of the previous Visiting Team. The school was encouraged to give teachers in-service instruction in technology. Staff members have been trained in the use of UTIPS, Cognos, Pioneer Library, Power-Grade, PowerPoint, spreadsheets, e-MINTS and others. It was recommended that the school find a way to recognize the improvement made by remedial students. Data has been made available to members of the staff, the school board, and the community to show the success of such programs as the junior high remedial program. It was suggested that the school implement a post-high school orientation plan for graduating seniors. The school implemented an annual College Orientation night, during which students and parents can hear from many different colleges and trade schools. A College Prep course has also

been added to the curriculum. The school has undertaken a program to survey graduates of Duchesne High School to learn their perception of how Duchesne High School prepared them for life beyond high school. The results of these surveys have been useful in developing programs and strategies to better prepare prospective graduates for post-high school education or employment.

CHAPTER 5: COMMUNITY BUILDING

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

The Visiting Team has found that Duchesne High School has made great strides in developing a collaborative process of ongoing school improvement. The Visiting Team commends Duchesne High School for the collegiality that is evident among all stakeholders.

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

The Visiting Team observed that there is support for student learning among the school's parents, community, Community Council, and instructional staff. This is evident from the level of participation in both academic and non-academic activities. The students expressed a feeling of mutual respect with all stakeholders.

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

The Visiting Team found evidence that focus groups included parents, students, and community members in the self-study process. Most stakeholders have ownership in the process and in the success of Duchesne High School.

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

There is evidence of a good communication network among all stakeholders. The Visiting Team noted that there exists communication with stakeholders via faculty meetings, School Community Council meetings, e-mails, and newspaper articles. The Visiting Team recommends that Duchesne High School continue to disseminate information that focuses on school improvement goals to all stakeholders.

CHAPTER 6: MAJOR COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Commendations:

- The administration is to be commended for its support of the staff and its positive professional relationship with students, parents, and the community.
- The Visiting Team commends the school for the efforts made to keep students and parents informed about student progress.
- The Visiting Team commends the school for its efforts to create a positive and safe learning environment, for holding high expectations for student learning, and for having a staff characterized as caring educators. Support and mutual respect exist among the students, parents, and the staff of Duchesne High School. Teachers are easily accessible to students for additional help or assistance whenever needed.
- The Visiting Team commends Duchesne High School for its offerings of extracurricular and enrichment programs, and for the large percentage of students who take advantage of these programs.
- The Visiting Team commends the school's leadership team and Community
 Council for their involvement in the decision-making process and support of the
 schools goals and programs.
- The Visiting Team commends the school for supporting a climate that promotes student pride in the school and in their own personal accomplishments, both academic and non-academic.

Recommendations:

- The Visiting Team recommends that the school continue to regularly evaluate and analyze data disaggregated by gender, ethnicity, at-risk, and socioeconomic status regularly to drive decisions affecting daily classroom instruction.
- The Visiting Team recommends that the school revisit the self-study to (1) simplify the school's mission statement to more clearly and concisely state the overall mission of the school, (2) establish benchmarks to monitor progress being made on school goals and on the action plan, and (3) state the indicators listed in the rubric used to measure progress on the school's DRSLs in a more measurable form.
- The Visiting Team recommends that the school revisit and update the school profile and self-study yearly.