

**The Report of the
Accreditation Visiting Team**

**Entheos Academy
4710 West 6200 South
Kearns, Utah 84118**

April 11-12, 2012



**Utah State Office of Education
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P.O. Box 144200
Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-4200**

Entheos Academy
4710 West 6200 South
Kearns, Utah 84118

April 11-12, 2012

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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 11-12, 2012, was conducted because of the school's desire to ensure quality education for all students in the school, and to increase student achievement.

The entire staff of Entheos Academy 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 Eric Robins is also commended.

The staff and administration are congratulated for their desire for excellence at Entheos Academy, 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 Entheos Academy.

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*** CMAC Representative Appointment

*****Charter School Representative Appointment

**UCAT Representative

****USBA Advisory Representative Appointment

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Faculty

Erica Adelman	4 th Grade Aide
Lilly Buchanan.....	Middle School Aide
Heidi Cochran.....	2 nd Grade Aide
Carolyn Dalley.....	1 st Grade Teacher
Selina Davis	Middle School Special Education
Julie Dean.....	Librarian
Kamie DeMille.....	5 th Grade Teacher
Camine Fuhriman.....	Discovery
Maria Garcia	Kindergarten Aide
Ellen Henkels	2 nd Grade Teacher
Hillary Hollingsworth.....	Special Education
Dalton Horscroft	Middle School Science Teacher
Alisha Horvath.....	5 th Grade Teacher
Brian Jackson.....	Middle School CTE Teacher
Janora Jara.....	4 th Grade Teacher
Garey Kent.....	Middle School PE Teacher
Jane Ketcheside.....	3 rd Grade Teacher
Stacey Leak.....	Middle School Language Arts
Tyrel Loertscher.....	6 th Grade Teacher
Tabbie Mayne	Middle School Social Studies
Teresa McEntire.....	3 rd Grade Teacher
Sarah McGough	Art Teacher
Marinel Mendoza.....	1 st Grade Aide
Nicole Mitchell	Special Education
Doug Miller.....	6 th Grade Teacher
Andrea Nelson	Special Education
Raegan Nielsen	Kitchen Manager
Lisa Noyes	Discovery
Dalton Peery.....	1 st Grade Teacher
Emily Pehrson.....	Kindergarten
Tere Palaez.....	2 nd Grade Teacher
Hunter Rafferty.....	Special Education Teacher
Judy Rannells.....	Special Education Teacher
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Madeline Shaffer.....	6 th Grade Aide
Daniele Shurtleff.....	5 th Grade Aide
Christine Tandiman.....	Special Education
Jessica Tsu	4 th Grade Teacher
Holli Wagaman	Middle School Aide
Dina Wecker	Middle School Language Arts
Pete Wecker	Middle School Math Teacher
Kay Welke	3 rd Grade Aide

ENTHEOS ACADEMY

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Entheos is to inspire the rising generation to reach the heights of their potential, ignite their curiosity to venture into challenging new learning experiences, and empower them to be leaders through service, who are committed to family and community. Then they can achieve their goals and dreams.

BELIEF STATEMENTS

The beliefs at Entheos Academy directly align with the ten Design Principles that Expeditionary Learning is based on. These principles enable teachers, students, and families to make the school mission statement a reality in their lives. The ten Design Principles are:

1. **The primacy of self-discovery**
Learning happens best with emotion, challenge, and the requisite support.
2. **The having of wonderful ideas**
Teaching in Expeditionary Learning schools fosters curiosity about the world.
3. **The responsibility for learning**
Learning is both a personal process of discovery and a social activity.
4. **Empathy and caring**
Learning is fostered best in communities where students' and teachers' ideas are respected and where there is mutual trust.
5. **Success and failure**
All students need to be successful if they are to build the confidence and capacity to take risks and meet increasingly difficult challenges.
6. **Collaboration and competition**
Individual development and group development are integrated so that the value of friendship, trust, and group action is clear.
7. **Diversity and inclusion**
Both diversity and inclusion increase the richness of ideas, creative power, problem-solving ability, and respect for others.
8. **The natural World**
A direct and respectful relationship with the natural world refreshes the human spirit and teaches the important ideas of recurring cycles and cause and effect.

9. **Solitude and reflection**

Students and teachers need time alone to explore their own thoughts, make their own connections, and create their own ideas.

10. **Service and compassion**

Students and teachers are strengthened by acts of consequential service to others.

DESIRED RESULTS FOR STUDENT LEARNING (DRSLs)

1. Students demonstrate increased engagement by showing improvement in their Habits of a Scholar.
2. Students produce high quality, meaningful writing using the 6 + 1 Traits.
3. Students read fiction and non-fiction texts, at grade level, using a variety of reading strategies.

Date of visit: April 11-12, 2012

MEMBERS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Deborah L. Swensen, Ph.D., Hawthorn Academy, Visiting Team Co-Chairperson

Edy McGee, Indian Hills Middle School, Canyons School District, Visiting Team Co-Chairperson

Laura Hermance, Guadalupe School

Denise Mott, Early Light Academy

Joy Palmer, Early Light Academy

VISITING TEAM REPORT

ENTHEOS SCHOOL

CHAPTER 1: SCHOOL PROFILE

Entheos Academy is an Expeditionary Learning School located in Kearns, Utah. It is a Utah charter school currently in its sixth year of existence. Its founding started as a vision in 2003 as a group of parents, teachers, and community leaders in West Jordan, Utah, began a design and education model for students in grades K-9. With the belief that excellence in education is achieved when students are challenged and encouraged to learn through real-life application, this team wanted to create an ideal learning environment for students. After a year of research, meetings, and work sessions, this group introduced a powerful mission statement and nine values that they believed could redefine education in Utah. A tenth value, Family, was added in 2008. The fundamental belief that Entheos represents is that learning is a choice. Parents and educators can only light the fire, create an engaging atmosphere, and provide students with opportunities for real learning and growth. Service and leadership are key components of helping students reach their full potential. *Entheos* is a Greek word that means “to be inspired from within.”

Although the school is in its sixth year of existence and is serving a population of 515 students who represent diverse socioeconomic, academic, and grade levels, the school has struggled with maintaining consistency because of four changes in leadership in the first four years. This has presented a unique challenge for the school. The current director has succeeded in getting the school on course and maintaining its consistency.

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

The Visiting Team applauds the school’s fidelity in the implementation of its charter focus. The team found that the school has succeeded in following the focus of its charter by giving students authentic learning opportunities through the Discovery and Adventure programs. The Visiting Team found that the school provides professional development for members of the staff to help improve their instructional skills; it also evaluates the degree of implementation. However, the Visiting Team found the school profile section of the self-study to lack what is normally found in this section. Specifically, rather than presenting disaggregated data identifying who is learning and who is not and what gaps are found between and among groups, the self-study listed sections of the *Expeditionary Learning Core Practices* and Charter Promises. However, in conversations with the administration and faculty, the Visiting Team learned that the school has quite a bit of data in the area of reading. The staff has developed a rubric and has set anchor papers. There is consistency in the grading of writing across the curriculum using this rubric. The school is using the Fountas and Pinnell reading assessment, and the current reading level of each elementary student is known and used for intervention grouping. Additionally, teachers have students respond to writing prompts throughout the year. These pieces of writing are scored using the 6 +1 Traits. However, data has not been collected on student performance other than the state DWA and CRT ELA scores. These data have not been

disaggregated, so the school does not know which groups of students are struggling. Also, although Entheos uses a test that accompanies Singapore math at the beginning of the year, it does not have a systematic plan in place to identify ongoing math progress. The Visiting Team recommends that Entheos continue tracking reading and writing data, but that it also begin disaggregation of this data so that the school has a clear understanding of who is learning and who is not. The Visiting Team also recommends that the school begin to collect and use data on math and other subjects taught at the school.

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

As the Visiting Team observed classes and spoke with teachers and administrators, it became obvious that many great things are happening at Entheos. For example, students love their school; they love their teachers; they enjoy the Expeditionary Learning model. Also, teachers love working at Entheos and are committed to the Expeditionary Learning model and to student learning. The teachers collect overall performance data in reading. They also utilize formative reading assessments to help form reading groups in the lower grades. Additionally, they use these data to determine reading instruction levels and needed additional support, and provide additional reading support in grades 7 and 8. The staff also has developed a rubric for writing and provided professional development on it. This is its second year of implementation and application.

That being said, however, it appears to the Visiting Team that Entheos does not understand the accreditation process. As a result, the school profile did not provide the kind of information that a Visiting Team needs to prepare for an accreditation visit. The school needs to attend additional training to better understand how the accreditation process is designed to work and use that knowledge to circumscribe the Expeditionary Learning elements. Entheos will then be in a position to make the modifications necessary to the school profile. The Visiting Team recommends that the following items be included in the school profile: student progress data for the school overall and in goal/DRSL areas, disaggregated by subgroups; a discussion of what the data reveals; an analysis of trends in student learning; and a discussion about the cause(s) of those trends.

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

In talking to the staff, parents, and the administration, the Visiting Team found that they are aware of many of the strengths of the school, the progress it has made in some areas, and areas that they need to address as next steps. As has been stated above that, because Entheos does not truly understand what the accreditation process is, the self-study does not accurately reflect the school's current strengths and limitations. While the school has been true to the focus of its charter, and many aspects of a self-study are embedded in the work done with Expeditionary Learning, a self-study has not been done on all aspects of the school. As the Visiting Team met with the administration, faculty, parents, and students, the strengths and weaknesses of the school were revealed. These items have been discussed in the Visiting Team

report. It appears that the school's report is more a report of its work in Expeditionary Learning than an Accreditation Report. Entheos needs to evaluate the work being done at the school under the overarching umbrella of Accreditation, rather than trying to place the different aspects under Expeditionary Learning.

Suggested Areas for Further Inquiry:

- The Visiting Team recommends that the leadership of Entheos continue to learn about the accreditation process and use that information as an umbrella under which the Expeditionary Learning principles will fit.
- The Visiting Team recommends that the school identify the types of data that need to be collected, disaggregate the data and complete an analysis of the data.

**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?*

As a charter school, Entheos had a mission statement before it opened. The DRSLs were developed by a leadership team and brought to the faculty for input. Although teachers are aware of the DRSLs and discussed them in faculty meetings, the Visiting Team could not find evidence that the entire school community was involved in the creation of the DRSLs and in defining a compelling purpose and vision for the school.

The Visiting Team found that the DRSLs are more individual student performance goals than desired results for student learning that encompass a broader instructional area. The Visiting Team recommends that the school revisit the DRSLs to make them broader, and use the current student goals as indicators under the DRSLs. The Visiting Team also suggests sending a belief inventory out to the entire school community, including all staff and board members; compiling the results; and using them to rework the DRSLs.

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

Although the self-study included DRSLs, a mission statement, and belief statements, the Visiting Team felt that there was a disconnect between the mission and beliefs

and DRSLs. In other words, the Visiting Team felt that the school used the charter and the principles of Expeditionary Learning to create the mission and beliefs, while the DRSLs came from an examination of the previous year's CRT and DWA scores. Entheos examined these data and determined that the school needs to focus on reading and writing; thus, two of the DRSLs cover these areas.

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

Indicators were not developed to assess the school's progress in assessing the DRSLs. The DRSLs included in the report would serve better as indicators under broader DRSLs. The Visiting Team recommends that Entheos revise the DRSLs as needed, then identify specific goals as indicators for each DRSL and develop a rubric that the school can use to assess the implementation of each DRSL.

- 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 school's mission guides its policies and decisions, as do the school's goals, which are currently identified as DRSLs. These elements are evident in the culture of the school.

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?*

Several teachers and students reported to the Visiting Team that the school staff works collaboratively on the curriculum. The school has recently moved to the Language Arts and Math Common Core because the Common Core best fits the Entheos model, according to the teachers. According to the Self-Study Report, teachers have worked together and developed school-wide, standards-based curriculum maps. However, when the Visiting Team asked to see some teachers' plans, they did not have it available. Teachers seemed to be aware of and to use their curriculums; additionally, students confirmed that the teachers built upon previous years' curricula. The Visiting Team recommends that all teachers be equally involved in revisions and have easy access to their grade level plans, as well as to other grade level plans for reference.

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

The Visiting Team has observed a high degree of student engagement in inquiry, problem solving, and higher-order thinking skills; furthermore, parents and students also view this as a major strength of Entheos. Students are given many choices in the classrooms and in their Discovery or Adventure sessions. Additionally, they are

encouraged to reflect on their work and keep their best work in their portfolios. Students also collaborate with each other and with teachers to further their success. Learning targets are visible in most rooms, and many students were working hard at the assigned tasks. The student work reflected the learning targets. Teachers were asking questions to increase student learning. Many students, however, were off task at various times, and teachers seemed to be unaware of the off-task behavior. The Visiting Team recognizes that it only saw a glimpse of what occurs in each classroom; therefore, it recommends that teachers engage in ongoing peer observations to evaluate fully that aspect of their teaching, and include a student behavior management component in lesson design. Observations should use the developed rubric, and results should be shared with the individual teachers.

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

The Visiting Team commends Entheos for its commitment to the use of Professional Learning Communities. Teachers and administrators reported that the staff meets regularly in PLCs, and that there is a strong focus on collaboration among the teaching staff. According to the self-study, the focus this year is on planning effective workshop models. The school year allows nine professional development days, and small groups of teachers regularly attend Expeditionary Learning trainings. Teachers also work collaboratively to coordinate with the Discovery/Adventure director to incorporate literature and other curricular areas into the program.

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

The self-study report has identified a need to improve in modifying instructional practice based on assessment for learning. Portfolios are used for all students, K-9, to keep track of their work and progress; students are proud of the work they have accomplished. Additionally, the Visiting Team observed a variety of informal assessments used in the classrooms, e.g., a variety of questioning techniques, different ways of eliciting student responses (including holding up fingers and drawing sticks to hear from random students), and examples of student work posted in the rooms. Goals and reflection are important aspects of student self-assessment. However, grades are not given until grade 9, and students select the pieces of work that they want to include in their portfolios. Entheos uses Fountas and Pinnell to assess reading three times per year, and a diagnostic writing assessment in addition to informal assessment for writing. The data presented in the self-study report indicates growth in writing at the eighth grade level between fall 2011 and spring 2012, and in reading for grades 3-5 from 2009 to the present. The Visiting Team recommends that the school define growth and further disaggregate the data.

Instruction:

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

The focus on Expeditionary Learning at Entheos allows many hands-on experiences for all students. According to students, field trips equal field work and must address the core curriculum. Entheos' belief in revision lets students constantly strive to produce their best work, and the students seem invested in the process. The Visiting Team observed different instructional strategies at work in classrooms, including the use of technology, joint reading and discussion, questioning, and attempting to elicit responses from all students. The Visiting Team commends Entheos for the excellent things that are happening in classrooms. However, it is important for teachers to be aware of what all their students are doing, keeping everyone engaged in the task at hand.

- 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 noticed the Habits of a Scholar posted in most classrooms, and student reflections in their portfolios focused on the Habits. Writing was clearly a focus in the classrooms, with many students working on writing pieces and keeping track of their progress on class charts. The use of the 6+1 Traits is evident. Students articulated that they use reading logs to help them keep track of how much they read. Additionally, they work on long-term reports and projects, write reflections on their reading, and describe a focus on some strategies to develop comprehension, e.g., authors' craft, context clues, root words, synthesizing and making connections.

- 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?*

Teacher professional development is driven by what teachers feel they need, by the Expeditionary Learning model, and by the administration. Teachers regularly meet in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) to collaborate and identify needs, according to the self-study report. Teachers and staff have sought professional development in reading, and they regularly attend Expeditionary Learning trainings. The staff regularly gets professional development as well.

- 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?*

Teachers appear to be proficient in their content areas and use a variety of approaches to reach students, including technology and art.

The Visiting Team observed all teachers teaching lessons that demonstrate their content knowledge. The school begins each day with a staff crew meeting in which they address and discuss best practices, and according to the self-study report, teachers maintain portfolios to keep an ongoing record of their work and to show growth.

- 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 the use of computers and document cameras in all classrooms, which increased the engagement of many students. Students have weekly computer time, as well as computers in the classrooms, with opportunities for learning games, research, and keyboarding in eighth grade. Students in fifth grade take spelling tests on the computer. The Visiting Team found that the middle school classes use the computers extensively to access resources to teach curriculum, as they do not have curriculum textbooks. However, the school reported that it does not have a written plan for the acquisition and integration of technology. The Visiting Team recommends that such a plan be written and used to maximize learning through the use of technology. This is especially critical because during state testing the middle school loses access to computers for multiple weeks.

Assessment:

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

The Visiting Team found that in reading and in writing, the staff uses data to identify students who need additional support, and the specific concept in which they need support. The Visiting Team found that the staff has developed a school-wide assessment for the writing goal based on the 6+1 Traits. Then, within each grade, teachers collaborated to write the traits in age-appropriate vocabulary so that students could use the rubric to self-edit. The goal has been for writing to improve, but the Visiting Team found that there has not been a clearly articulated growth expectation. The Visiting Team recommends that the school define its achievement expectation.

The school has started implementation of its writing rubric, and does validity checks on scoring each year. The Visiting Team recommends that the school start to collect data on this rubric and disaggregate the data to have a clearer picture of what is happening in writing. The school should not rely exclusively on the state CRTs and fifth and eighth grade state DWA scores to show improvement.

The Visiting Team found that the school is also using a purchased assessment, Fountas and Pinnell, three times a year to determine reading levels of students. The staff has created a data board and reviews the levels of students after each administration of the assessment. Paraprofessionals in the elementary are trained on how to provide remediation in conjunction with classroom teachers.

The school is using the Fountas and Pinnell assessment for grades K-8. The school recognized that this instrument is only valid and reliable up through grade 6, and that it needs to look at other data/assessments for these students. The Visiting Team found that the school is using class grades in conjunction with Fountas and Pinnell to determine which students in grades 7 and 8 need to be in a reading class. The Visiting

Team recommends that the school create a school-wide assessment for use in the middle school.

The school indicated that it uses the purchased Singapore math beginning assessment. However, the Visiting Team found that the school does not have any further class or school-wide assessment in math other than classroom tests, although conversations with the PLC revealed that individual teachers use end of unit/concept tests to track student mathematical growth and to identify students needing interventions. The PLC also described a plan to develop school-wide math tracking.

The Visiting Team found that Entheos has a beginning understanding of the RTI model. Teachers have received one training on how to collect data, and some have begun to do this.

The Visiting Team found that the administration and PLC leadership at Entheos review the data from the state CRTs and the DWA during a June meeting. During that meeting, the leadership team and administration identify school goals for the next school year. The concern of the Visiting Team is that data from state tests in June are only raw scores. These scores do not accurately reflect student performance, as the year's raw score to scaled score table has not yet been statistically determined and shared with schools. The Visiting Team recommends that the leadership team meet later to review data when the current year's raw score to scaled score table has been released, so that they have a more accurate understanding of student performance. In August the information is shared with the rest of the staff to discuss the possible new goals and obtain staff buy-in for these goals. It is recommended that the staff disaggregate data by subgroup to better know the goals that need to be set.

Finally, the school utilizes student portfolios to keep an ongoing record of student work. However, the work is self-selected by the students, and so does not provide a consistent picture of student performance.

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

The Visiting Team found that Entheos utilizes state-required assessments (e.g., DIBELS, CRTs and DWA) and the results from them. The Visiting Team found that the school has teachers assess student progress through an evaluation of the previous spring's CRTs. The teachers also utilize the data to identify the concepts on which their incoming students did not perform well. The Visiting Team recommends that the staff disaggregate the data by standard and objective, and also that it realize that the greatest strength of the state assessments is in helping teachers know how to improve instruction.

In addition, the school has purchased Fountas and Pinnell, and is using it in grades K-8 to fairly assess individual reading progress. When students are below reading level, additional subtests in Fountas and Pinnell are used to further identify areas for student learning needs. Students are grouped according to ability based on formative assessments and instruction is given to meet their learning needs. Fountas and Pinnell

is given three times a year. Group composition may change after analysis of the test results. The process is consistent and equitable to track individual academic progress in reading in grades K-6. While the assessment does not give a valid indication of where students are in grades 7-9, the assessment is used to identify students who are not even reading at a Z level. CRT scores and class grades are used to identify students in these grades for additional support through a seventh grade or eighth grade reading class. The Visiting Team recommends that the school develop a common assessment for reading for middle school grades or look at finding an assessment that provides that information.

Some data is collected using the 6+1 writing rubric. The Visiting Team recommends that the same attention to detail that has been given to reading be given to all content areas. In addition, the Visiting Team recommends that the school disaggregate the data by subgroup to identify trends, and so that teachers know better who is learning and who is not.

The Special Education Department works within classes to support students. SPED students are identified through SPED assessments. A student progress report is maintained on each SPED student.

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

The Visiting Team found that the school uses data to assess the success of the school most strongly in reading and writing. However, from discussions with the staff and administration, the goals that were set were based on CRT data and growth based on the same state assessment, especially in writing. The formative assessment that the staff uses to help identify student progress did not appear to be a part of determining achieving academic expectation. What is also unclear is the specific academic goal. The Visiting Team recommends that the school set a specific, measurable growth goal in each identified area and incorporate all of the assessments to determine success in achieving academic expectations. The Visiting Team further recommends that the staff disaggregate the reading data and CRTs and compile data for writing with disaggregation. This is a critical step for the staff to identify trends and subgroups that show a learning gap with other groups within the school.

The Visiting Team found that the school is true to the focus of its charter. Entheos has been careful not to overwhelm the staff by taking on too many of the Habits of a Scholar found in Expeditionary Learning. The Visiting Team applauds the school for the work done on this DRSL. In order for the school to measure success and/or progress on this DRSL, the Visiting Team recommends that the staff have specific, school-wide learning targets. The Visiting Team found that the school recognizes that this is an area in which it can improve. The school has planned to develop a rubric to measure successful implementation of this DRSL.

The Visiting Team found that, as one of its next steps, the school needs to establish specific targets under each school goal, develop assessments to measure

implementation, and incorporate these into a timeline for consistent understanding of who is learning and who is not learning.

- 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 found that the school's professional development program provides many opportunities for teachers to collaborate on analysis of data and some development of student assessment strategies. Teachers collaborate each week through PLCs or whole faculty meetings. In PLCs they discuss curriculum and instructional strategies. The Visiting Team found that the staff has collaborated through its PLCs to analyze reading data, establish anchor papers, create internal inter-rater reliability on the 6+1 Traits, and learn how to create improved lesson plans to engage students. Teachers also set individual goals that align with the school goals, and maintain a portfolio on these goals. The Visiting Team found that the administration, working in conjunction with Expeditionary Learning, has developed an observation tool to determine consistent implementation of the lesson plans developed in professional development. Teachers then utilize this tool and conduct observations of each others' teaching.

However, the Visiting Team found that the school has not done much professional development on helping teachers on the development of assessment strategies. In visiting with them, the administrators indicated that they recognize that they need more training in this area and are working with Expeditionary Learning to help provide that training. In this way, the development of assessments will align with the charter focus.

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

The Visiting Team found that the school is collecting some data to assess identified school goals. The data collected supports an overall reading goal. However, the data does not provide progress on the specific areas of the goal—fiction and nonfiction reading. The school administration and faculty did identify that there is consistent implementation of the writing assessment, and that the school needs to start collecting data to support the school writing goal. The individual teachers grade students on their implementation of Habits of a Scholar. However, there is no consistency in assessment across the school. It is recommended that the school develop consistent means to measure each school goal. The school also needs to determine what data will be collected to support effective implementation of the school DRSLs. The school then needs to develop rubrics to assess the DRSLs and ensure that there is organizational agreement on the use of the rubrics.

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 Visiting Team commends the leadership team at Entheos for persevering through the challenges it has faced over the last several years while working to develop an academic learning climate that supports learning and teaching. The leadership team at the school consists of the director, the assistant director, the Professional Learning Community (PLC) leads, and the Expeditionary Learning designer.

The guiding framework of Entheos comes from Expeditionary Learning, a professional development group. The school uses the principles of Expeditionary Learning in all that it does. In conversations with both administrators and teachers, the Visiting Team heard repeatedly that teachers are given ample opportunities to learn. For example, they are expected to do many of the same things that they will require of their students, including producing a portfolio. One area of focus at Entheos is Habits of a Scholar, which is based on the practices of Expeditionary Learning. Currently, the school is stressing three of these habits: reflection, responsibility and perseverance. The number of habits will increase over time; however, it is not known how many the school will eventually have. Another area that fits loosely with the Habits of a Scholar is rigor. Students are expected to learn and perform at high levels.

Although Entheos has DRSLs, the school uses the term “work plans” because it more closely fits the Expeditionary Learning model. The school used the information from the work plan to develop its DRSLs. It used a collaborative process as it determined that the school would focus on reading and writing. Entheos also has a section in the school profile showing scores for the focus groups. However, neither the individual focus groups nor the departments had separate reports. Conversations with the administration, teachers, and parents revealed that Entheos does not clearly understand the process of accreditation. The Visiting Team strongly recommends that the leadership team of Entheos continue learning about the overarching aspects of accreditation and use them to include the Expeditionary Learning principles.

- 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?*

Entheos used data as it constructed the work plan for reading and writing. Because of the data the school had for language arts, it chose to use Fountas and Pinnell as an assessment tool to monitor reading progress. The intervention component of Fountas and Pinnell is used to help those students who are not reading on grade level. Entheos uses the 6+1 Traits of Writing to evaluate writing consistently across the school. The school now needs to track writing evaluations and chart grade-level data and

disaggregated school data to have a clear understanding of who is and is not learning in each writing trait.

To track student engagement, the leadership team uses the Habits of a Scholar, because it feels that if the students are excelling in the Habits of Scholar there will be evidence of them being engaged in the classroom. Although the school wanted to create a rubric to assess student engagements, they have not been able to identify appropriate indicators. The administrators reported that the school compares the Habits of a Scholar scores from first and second semester. They indicated that the assessment of these scores is not uniform throughout the school. For example, some teachers use specific items in the citizenship grade, while others use targeted learning goals.

- 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 administrators at Entheos feel that the school cannot educate students if the environment is not physically and emotionally safe. To ensure that the facility is physically safe, the school participates annually in the State's risk management program. Issues involving emotional safety, including bullying incidents, are handled by the assistant director and the counselor.

While the Board ultimately has stewardship over all aspects of Entheos Academy, the director handles the finances. It is his responsibility to make certain that the school is financially sound. The school's business manager also aids in this process. The director meets with the Board monthly to go over the financial aspects of the school. The director indicated that the Board allows him to handle the day-to-day management of the school; the Board members are overseers of the school and are vigilant in protecting the school's charter. The director views himself as the point person. He delegates responsibilities to others, then allows them to do their jobs, and holds them accountable for accomplishing them.

Conversations with parents and teachers confirmed that the director is allocating resources appropriately. These groups indicated that, while money is always an issue, the director procures what he can, and that there is a culture of sharing between faculty members at the school.

- 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?*

Much of the learning at Entheos centers on expeditions. Conversations with the leadership team, teachers, and students revealed that this aspect encourages commitment, participation, collaboration, and shared responsibility for decisions made involving student learning. For example, at the middle school, teachers and administrators collaborate frequently to plan and implement the expeditions. One of

the ninth grade expeditions was on greatness. Teachers across the curriculum were involved as students learned about what makes a person great. Another example is the Pedals for Hope expedition in the eighth grade. Again, cross-curricular activities supported this expedition as the students researched cancer and then did a service project to raise money for the Huntsman Cancer Institute.

The Visiting Team commends the faculty for its willingness to go the second and third mile in planning and implementing these expeditions that are of true community value. The Visiting Team recommends that student and parent input be sought and considered.

The leadership at Entheos also empowers the faculty by having a strong teacher enculturation program. New teachers are assigned a specific mentor and are given training at the beginning of the school year. Much of the enculturation is dependent on the PLC lead. Mentoring is going to be particularly important next year, as a second campus opens in Magna and six teachers transfer to the new school. The six new teachers at the original campus will need much support as they come on board.

The Visiting Team commends the administration for also empowering and training the staff in practicing the same strategies with each other that they use within each of their crews. Each morning before school begins, the staff comes together to share readings, greetings, initiatives, student recognition, and recognition of each other.

- e) *To what extent has the school established a formal system through which each student has an adult staff member who knows the student well and assists the student in achieving the school-wide expectations for student learning?*

One of the important aspects of the Expeditionary Learning model is to create “crews” or groups of individuals who come together for common purposes. The Visiting Team found that there are both student and teacher crews. To emphasize the importance of each member of the school community coming together to promote student learning, Expeditionary Learning uses the phrase, “we’re crew, not passengers.” Simply stated, all members of the community have responsibilities. Using the structure of crews, each student at Entheos is known, cared for, encouraged, and helped. Teacher leaders of crews have the responsibility to know each student, create a safe environment, and care about each student; consequently, every student is greeted every day. Additionally, every student is named and acknowledged. Furthermore, every student has a place where he/she feels he/she belongs. Every crew meets for a short period every morning as school begins. In the middle school grades, students return to their crews every afternoon before school ends for teachers to review with their crew their assignments for that day and upcoming projects. In elementary classes, since students are with the same teacher all day, the crew is part of wrapping up the day. On Fridays, crew time is expanded to an hour. The Visiting Team commends Entheos for recognizing the need that each student has to be nurtured in order to promote student learning. The Visiting Team recommends that, as the staff works more with data, the information is shared with each student’s crew leader.

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 Northwest, which requires specific responses regarding the physical plant, finances, audit of school records, advertising, etc.

CHAPTER 4: NORTHWEST SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT STANDARD

Culture of Continual Improvement:

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

As has been written in other sections of this report, the Visiting Team felt that Entheos did not use the accreditation framework for conducting its self-study; consequently, although the school has a student improvement plan based on its perceived needs, the identification of the needs and development of that plan did not stem from the self-study process. For example, while the accreditation process expects a report analyzing the progress the school has made in each of the seven groups, it appears that there was only one group, consisting of ten individuals who rated the school in all sections of the NSSE Survey of Instructional and Organizational Effectiveness. This group consisted of an administrator, two teachers, three students, two parents, one non-certified staff member, and a representative from Expeditionary Learning. Other stakeholders were not included in the analysis. Furthermore, there was not a departmental analysis included in the self-study. The Visiting Team found no evidence that this analysis took place.

Professional Leadership Committee leaders met to discuss DRSLs and then shared and ideas discussed with the staff. Many stakeholders seem to be aware of the improvement plan, but there seems to be a need for more collaboration and involvement from all stakeholders in developing it.

- 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?*

Although the Visiting Team found extensive evidence of ongoing professional development and meaningful collaboration at Entheos, it is apparent that the alignment is with Expeditionary Learning rather than with the broader accreditation framework. Therefore, while the school has a mission statement, belief statements, and DRSLs, these accreditation elements are not used as the focal point for professional development. The Visiting Team recommends that Entheos reexamine the accreditation framework and reorganize its alignment—including the elements of Expeditionary Learning, which is an instructional model—under that framework.

- 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 has a plan based on the Expeditionary Learning instructional model, and uses it to address needed changes. The Visiting Team feels that Entheos made an honest effort to identify areas where its students needed additional instruction and support. It also feels that there is commitment to this plan. However, the Visiting Team feels that the plan is not adequate because it is not aligned with the accreditation framework. Furthermore, the plan should stem from the DRSLs, which need to be broad enough to encompass broad concepts for student learning. DRSLs and action plans need to be tweaked occasionally as the school evolves, but they should not need to be completely changed each year.

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

The Visiting Team commends Entheos for its commitment to ongoing professional development. Examples of professional development include Expeditionary Learning trainings, Leveled Literacy Intervention training, and RTI training.

The school created conditions for continuous improvement through annual retreats, student-led conferences, academic and character goal setting, and an emphasis on revision of work.

CHAPTER 5: COMMUNITY BUILDING

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

The Visiting Team found that there is a lot of community building taking place within the school. Once a month, the whole school has a school assembly which serves as a “community circle” where staff and students celebrate different activities and successes. Each morning and at the end of each day, classes meet together in their crews to share concerns, reading, greetings, questions, and announcements, as well as to celebrate accomplishments. Every morning, the staff members meet in their

community circle for similar community-building activities.

Teachers take part in various professional training classes and also work together within Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), wherein they discuss various needs of the students and make plans for improvement. Student-led conferences are held, and students are given an opportunity to share their work and progress with parents. Each of these practices helps foster community building and working relationships.

Discovery leaders work with the grade level teams to coordinate the activities with classroom learning. Teachers use writing to reflect on the students' experience during the Discovery activity.

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

The Visiting Team commends Entheos' collaborative networks between the school and the community. Entheos strongly believes in hands-on, authentic activities, and therefore has programs (Discovery and Adventure) in which the school works with many volunteers in the community to help carry out various learning activities for the students. Students can participate in one each quarter. As these activities are planned and carried out, curriculum connections are discussed and addressed. At the end of the Discovery activities, students celebrate the activity and have the opportunity to share with their parents. Students are also involved in service projects that give back to the community and provide authentic student learning based on research. Some examples include labeling storm drain water destinations, the Jordan River Parkway, Pedals for Hope, etc.

The Parent Crew Organization (PCO) collaborates with teachers in planning and addressing matters which support student learning. The PCO coordinates parents in various Parent Crews that support the academic learning of the school. The school requests parents to donate 30 hours of service each year, and provides them with multiple ways to be involved in the school.

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

According to the school's report, a mixed group of 10 members that included one administrator, two teachers, three students, two parents, one non-certified staff member, and an Expeditionary Learning representative met to compile a self-study, but most stakeholders were not involved in a focus group as defined by the accreditation framework. All staff and board members need to be involved in one of the focus groups identified for the accreditation process. The Visiting Team found that the support staff at the school, while feeling included in the school culture, were not involved in the accreditation process. It is recommended that these members of the school community be a part of future focus groups. In addition, each focus group should include parents and students.

Although the group rated the school in each of the focus group categories, there was no explanation for the ratings. The Visiting Team learned that Expeditionary Learning surveys parents at the end of the year on the accomplishment of Expeditionary Learning's goals. Then the administration and the board attend a retreat in the summer and evaluate the results. Plans are made for change and/or improvement.

Some teachers met as part of their PLC and discussed DRSLs. After this, they shared and discussed them with teachers in staff meetings. The Visiting Team found that the DRSLs were mainly treated as individual goals for learning in reading and writing. The Visiting Team recommends that members of the leadership team go on an accreditation visit to better understand the process.

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

Results are shared through "Town Meetings" with parents and through the Principal's "State of the School Address." The PCO Newsletter also shares general results of school improvement on specific student academic goals.

On an individual basis, students each have a portfolio, which they share with parents at conferences. They show parents samples of their work and how it has improved over time. Students choose the work to be included in the portfolio in the upper grades with teacher suggestions. For younger students, the teacher chooses. Since the portfolios are being used as an assessment tool, the Visiting Team recommends that there be clear expectations about what should be included in the portfolios.

Students share learned skills from Discovery experiences at celebration activities.

The Visiting Team commends the counselor for holding SEOPs with the ninth grade students. The SEOPs for these students are almost completed. The Visiting Team recommends that the counselor implement this process for eighth and seventh grade students and their parents each year.

CHAPTER 6: MAJOR COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Commendations:

- The Visiting Team commends Entheos for building a community culture. The staff of Entheos is a closely knit family, working and striving to educate their students in all social and academic areas. They reinforce their sense of community by coming together each morning as a staff to learn, acknowledge and celebrate each other.

- The Visiting Team commends Entheos for its commitment to its charter focus. The school provides exploratory opportunities for all students, allowing them to participate in real-life activities, service opportunities, and authentic skill development and learning.
- The Visiting Team commends Entheos for creating an environment where students feel safe and experience success in multiple ways.
- The Visiting Team commends the administration at Entheos for giving teachers the autonomy to act and share the leadership of the school through PLCs in order to act in their students' best interest.

Recommendations:

- The Visiting Team recommends that all stakeholders become trained on the accreditation process.
- The Visiting Team recommends that, once trained, all stakeholders (students, teachers, parents, staff, administrators, and board members) must reexamine the self-study process to incorporate all aspects of Expeditionary Learning and school improvement.
- The Visiting Team recommends that Entheos expand its development and use of formative and summative assessments so that individual student interventions can be applied, evaluated, and modified as necessary.
- The Visiting Team recommends that data be disaggregated by subgroup to better identify learning trends, achievement gaps, and who is and is not learning. Once these items are identified, this information must be used to develop the school's action plan.