

**The Report of the
Accreditation Visiting Team**

**EskDale High School
1000 Circle Drive
EskDale, Utah 84728**

April 24, 2009



**Utah State Office of Education
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Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-4200**

**THE REPORT OF THE
VISITING TEAM REVIEWING**

**EskDale High School
1000 Circle Drive
EskDale, Utah 84728**

April 24, 2009

UTAH STATE OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword	ii
Utah State Board of Education.....	iii
Millard County School District Board of Education and District Administration	1
EskDale High School Administration and Staff	2
EskDale High School Mission Statement, Belief Statements, and DRSLs	3
Members of the Visiting Team	5
Visiting Team Report.....	6
Chapter 1: School Profile.....	6
Suggested Areas for Further Inquiry.....	7
Chapter 2: Northwest Association of Accredited Schools (NAAS)	
Teaching and Learning Standards.....	7
Mission, Beliefs and Desired Results for Student Learning (DRSLs).....	7
Curriculum	8
Instruction	8
Assessment.....	10
Chapter 3: NAAS Support Standards.....	10
Leadership and Organization	10
School Services	11
Facilities and Finances	11
Chapter 4: NAAS School Improvement Standard	12
Chapter 5: Community Building.....	13
Chapter 6: Major Commendations and Recommendations of the Visiting Team	14

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 24, 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 EskDale 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 Head Teacher Greg Faber is also commended.

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

Patti Harrington, Ed.D.
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**ESKDALE HIGH SCHOOL
ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF**

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Support Staff

Betsy Weight..... Secretary

Faculty

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Greg Faber

Lois Faber
Stella Timm

ESKDALE HIGH SCHOOL

MISSION STATEMENT

Our Mission at EskDale High School and Garrison Junior High is to provide students with the educational opportunity to become informed and responsible citizens engaged in life-long learning.

BELIEF STATEMENTS

- All students can learn.
- Teachers, staff, administrators, parents, students, and community members share in the responsibility for providing a supportive learning environment within our school.
- Each student has unique social, emotional, and intellectual needs.
- High expectations for all students will yield high achievement
- Students learn in different ways and must be provided with a variety of instructional and assessment approaches to support their learning.

DESIRED RESULTS FOR STUDENT LEARNING (DRSLs)

EskDale High School's desired results for student learning are as follows:

Lifelong Learning

- Students make a commitment to creating quality work and striving for excellence.
- Students use a variety of learning strategies, personal skills, and time management skills to enhance learning.
- Students gather, organize, analyze, evaluate, and reflect on information to solve problems and make improvement.

Personal and Social Responsibility

- Students take responsibility for personal actions and act ethically.
- Students respect themselves and others and understand and appreciate the diversity and interdependence of all people.
- Students act as responsible citizens in school and in the community by dealing with the diversity of opinions and beliefs in responsible ways.

Effective Communication Skills

- Students communicate with clarity, purpose, and understanding of audience.
- Students integrate the use of a variety of communication forms and use a wide variety of communication skills.
- Students recognize and evaluate various forms of communication.

Date of Visit: April 24, 2009

MEMBERS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Steven K. Hirase, Murray School District, Visiting Team Chairperson

VISITING TEAM REPORT

ESKDALE HIGH SCHOOL

CHAPTER 1: SCHOOL PROFILE

EskDale High School and Garrison Junior High began operation in July 2001 as a public school in the Millard County School District. At that time, Superintendent Raymond Timothy requested that the Millard Board of Education and the Utah State Office of Education accept the idea that the private school operating at EskDale, Utah be brought into the school district. Both the county and the state accepted this proposal, and EskDale High School and Garrison Junior High were born. Like the private school before it, EskDale High School continues to offer an excellent opportunity for the students in Snake Valley, which covers part of west Millard County, Utah and an eastern part of White Pine County in Nevada.

The primary focus of EskDale High School is to provide each student with opportunities to enable them to proceed on to higher education through a university or some other educational institution.

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

EskDale High School has a veteran teaching staff with extensive experience that, due to the size of the school, has to cover a wide range of content areas. Three of the four staff members have over twenty years of experience, with the other teacher being in her first year as a teacher.

Due to the nature of EskDale High School, small class sizes allow for attention to individual students' needs.

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

The Visiting Team was impressed by EskDale High School's school profile. The profile was detailed, and it was very apparent that the school understood the accreditation process and the role of the school profile. It is recommended that in the future, EskDale High School consider providing disaggregated data in the areas of students' ethnicity, low-income status, and special education status.

EskDale High School should consider providing its action plan in a format that provides more specific information. The information should include the specific objective, time period/date the objective will be completed, and the individual(s) responsible for working on the objective.

Suggested Areas for Further Inquiry:

- The school should consider the analysis of Utah Basic Skills Competency Test (UBSCT) data. If, through the analysis of this data, it is determined that there are areas that need to be addressed, objectives should be developed and added to the school's action plan

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

Shared Vision, 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 engaged in a collaborative process to develop a shared vision for the school. A consensus-building process was established that involved all stakeholders in defining the school's beliefs, mission, and goals.

Interviews with students and staff members substantiated a high level of participation among the major stakeholders in the development of the school's DRSLs. Although parents were not available for interview by the Visiting Team, the Visiting Team was confident that the school involved parents in the process. Stakeholders viewed the process as an opportunity to affect the school and student achievement in a positive way.

- b) *To what extent do the school's mission and beliefs align to support the school's desired results for student learning (DRSLs)?*

There is clear alignment among the school's mission, beliefs and DRSLs. They reflect the school learning community's commitment to meet the individual needs of every student who attends EskDale High School.

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

The DRSLs were completed, adopted and implemented during the current school year. Although the school has listed specific indicators for each DRSL designed, the school has not begun the process of defining how the indicators will be assessed on an individual student basis.

- 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?*

At EskDale High School the mission, beliefs and DRSLs are just beginning to guide the procedures, policies and decisions of the school.

Curriculum :

- a) *To what extent does the staff work collaboratively to ensure the curriculum is based on clearly defined standards and the Utah Core Curriculum (with inclusion of the Utah Life Skills)?*

With a staff that is comprised of four teachers (including one of the teachers who serves as a head teacher) a high level of collaboration has been critical in addressing the Utah State Core Curriculum. In addition, the school relies on EDNET and the delivery of courses through technology with Millard School District. This requires an additional level of collaboration with individuals outside of the school community. Additionally, school staff members have been highly involved with professional development activities/offerings through the district.

- b) *To what extent does the teaching staff work collaboratively to support the development of a curriculum that focuses on the school's desired results for student learning?*

This is an area that is emerging due to the accreditation process. The staff has addressed how the DRSLs align within the content of each of the individual departments. EskDale High School has yet to define its DRSLs in terms of specific observable and measurable behaviors.

Instruction:

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

In each of the classes observed, students were engaged in various learning activities. While the Visiting Team observed classes in a variety of content areas, it was not obvious that the staff was aware of a wide variety of effective instructional strategies and corresponding activities. Although this may have been due to a limited amount of time to observe classes, the Visiting Team recommends that professional development focus on best practices (e.g.,

cooperative learning, Socratic questioning) that will actively engage students in learning.

- b) *To what extent have the school and the staff developed strategies for instruction that build the capacity for explicitly teaching the identified DRSL in every classroom?*

The school is just beginning its work on implementing DRSLs on the individual classroom level. The Visiting Team did not observe classroom teachers explicitly teaching DRSLs in their classrooms.

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

In each of the classes observed, teachers employed a variety of instructional strategies/activities. Teachers generally used multiple strategies during class time, changing strategies two or three times. With small class sizes, teachers frequently tailor their instruction to meet the needs of the individual learner.

The school currently does not have a limited English proficiency (LEP) population or students with disabilities.

- 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?*

Due to the size of the school and the number of content areas each teacher must teach, not all teachers are certified in all of their content areas. All teachers appear to be proficient in their content areas and exhibited effective instructional approaches during the classroom observations. The majority of teachers are involved in professional development to address certification issues.

- 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 a wide variety of technology being used in the classroom setting. The school reports that Millard County School District has provided them with good technology support. The school also provides students with additional learning opportunities by taking advantage of EDNET and Electronic High School course offerings.

Assessment:

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

Expectations have been identified school-wide with the development of the school's DRSLs. The formulation of the DRSLs has been a result of the accreditation process, and school-wide assessments have not been developed.

- b) *To what extent are assessments of student learning developed using methods that reflect the intended purpose and performance standards?*

There is limited evidence to indicate that assessments of student learning have been developed using methods that reflect the intended purpose and performance standard.

- c) *To what extent are assessments designed, developed, and used in a fair and equitable manner?*

From interviews with stakeholders, including students, it is very evident that the staff is committed to providing a safe and nurturing environment at the school. The Visiting Team is confident that the staff engages in fair and equitable assessment of student performance. Students are provided with adequate opportunities to receive instruction to assist them in learning the essential skills and knowledge necessary to pass their tests.

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 and actively supporting teaching and learning?*

It was very apparent to the Visiting Team that the academic success that students at EskDale High School achieve is a direct result of the strong leadership at the school. The head teacher has high standards and expectations for student performance and maintains a focus on instructional goals and student learning.

- b) *To what extent does the school leadership employ effective decision making that is data-driven, research-based, and collaborative?*

The school engages in a moderate level of data-driven decision making. The collection and analysis of data is conducted for the purpose of both problem solving and problem finding, to help the school anticipate and prevent potential problems.

As the school engaged with the accreditation process, students, parents, and members of the staff held meaningful roles in the decision-making process. In speaking with participants of this process, the Visiting Team noted a high level of satisfaction with the process and a sense of responsibility and shared ownership in the school's goals and action plans.

- c) *To what extent does the school leadership monitor progress in student achievement and instructional effectiveness through a comprehensive assessment system and continuous reflection?*

The school consistently monitors student progress in achieving mastery on state standards as identified in the Utah State Core Curriculum. The data collected is used to improve both individual student learning and instructional effectiveness of staff members.

It is recommended by the Visiting Team that the school's assessment system be expanded to include school-wide assessments of the DRSLs.

- d) *To what extent does the school leadership provide skillful stewardship by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources of the school for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment?*

Stakeholders all indicate strong support and commend the administration for the creation of a safe and positive learning environment that supports student achievement.

- e) *To what extent does the school leadership make decisions related to the allocation and use of resources which align with the school goals, the achievement of the DRSLs, and school improvement efforts?*

The human, instructional, financial, and physical resources of the school appear to be allocated to support the school's mission and goals and used in ways that support student learning.

- f) *To what extent does the school leadership empower the school community and encourage commitment, participation, collaboration, and shared responsibility for student learning?*

The school administration has established school-wide structures to encourage commitment, participation, collaboration, and shared responsibility for student learning. Most individuals indicated that the school was the focal point of

community activities. The school leadership has taken advantage of this and has successfully engaged the community in a shared responsibility for student learning.

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 Continuous Improvement:

- a) *To what extent does the school build skills and the capacity for improvement through comprehensive and ongoing professional development programs focused on the school's goals for improvement?*

The school is clearly committed to school improvement through professional development activities. The school staff members participate in professional development that is centered on student improvement and learning. The majority of staff members have been involved in obtaining their ESL endorsement through Millard County School District. There is a consistent effort by staff to facilitate the acquisition of new knowledge and skills that support student achievement. However, professional development opportunities are sometimes a challenge for the school due to issues related to the geographical isolation of the school.

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

The administration works to develop a culture of collaboration and improvement. The school supports the work of individuals and groups responsible for implementing school improvement initiatives while sustaining commitment to continuous improvement.

CHAPTER 5: COMMUNITY BUILDING

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

As previously mentioned, the school is a focal point of community involvement. Many members of the community are actively involved with many aspects of the school. Community members may assist as volunteers, substitutes, etc. in the smooth operation of the school. Although some parents must travel a significant distance to the school, after-school programs and conferences are well attended by all parents. The Visiting Team found a strong climate of community and pride demonstrated through parental involvement, staff dedication and administrative support.

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

The school engages families as partners in students' education and as full partners in decisions related to the school that affect their children and families. In addition, the school has established collaborative networks of support with community members and groups, youth-serving agencies, clergy and government leaders.

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

Teachers, parents and students were involved with the focus groups process. All parents and students had the opportunity to respond to the NSSE Opinion Inventory.

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

School improvement data has been clearly identified and documented, and is used to drive curriculum, programs and instruction across the school.

CHAPTER 6: MAJOR COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Commendations:

- The Visiting Team commends the head teacher and the staff of EskDale High School for their commitment to their students. The staff faces many unique challenges due to the size of the school, but staff members are aware of individual student learning needs and are able to meet these needs.
- The Visiting Team commends the school for the high level of collaboration with stakeholders through the accreditation process. It was evident that the school is the focal point of the community and that parents are supportive of the school and its staff.
- The Visiting Team commends the school for its music programs. All students are involved with the program. The program provides students with a number of opportunities that extend beyond the school day. Participation in state and regional competitions and the trip to San Francisco provide the students with valuable learning opportunities that cannot be duplicated in a classroom setting.
- The Visiting Team commends the students of EskDale High School for their commitment to their education. Students are engaged in their educational program and are supportive of one another. They are supportive of the school staff and enjoy their interactions with members of the learning community.

Recommendations:

- The Visiting Team recommends that the school and staff continue their efforts in the development and implementation of tools to measure progress on the school's DRSLs. These should be stated in specific terms, including clear indicators that are observable and measurable. The school should investigate means of reporting progress on both a school-wide and an individual student level related to the indicators for each DRSL.
- The Visiting Team recommends that the school incorporate/integrate the DRSLs into its action/improvement plan.
- The Visiting Team recommends that the school institutionalize one DRSL during the accreditation period.