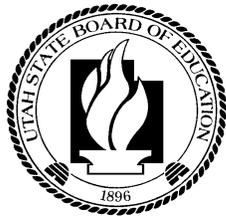


**The Report of the
Accreditation Visiting Team**

**Falcon Ridge Academy
633 East Highway 9
P.O. Box 790099
Virgin, Utah 84779**

March 20, 2012



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250 East 500 South
P.O. Box 144200
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Falcon Ridge Academy
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March 20, 2012

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword	iii
Utah State Board of Education.....	iv
Falcon Ridge Academy Ownership, Administration and Staff.....	1
Falcon Ridge Academy Mission Statement, Belief Statements, and DRSLs	2
Members of the Visiting Team	3
Visiting Team Report.....	4
Chapter 1: School Profile.....	4
Suggested Areas for Further Inquiry	4
Chapter 2: Northwest Accreditation Commission (Northwest)	
Teaching and Learning Standards.....	4
Mission, Beliefs and Desired Results for Student Learning (DRSLs).....	4
Curriculum	5
Instruction	6
Assessment.....	7
Chapter 3: Northwest Support Standards.....	8
Leadership and Organization	8
School Services	9
Facilities and Finances	9
Chapter 4: Northwest School Improvement Standard	10
Chapter 5: Community Building.....	12
Chapter 6: Major Commendations and Recommendations of the Visiting Team	12

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, March 20, 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 Falcon Ridge 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 Joette Hayden is also commended.

The staff and administration are congratulated for their desire for excellence at Falcon Ridge 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 Falcon Ridge Academy.

Larry K. Shumway, Ed.D.
State Superintendent
of Public Instruction

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*Board of Regents Appointments

*** CMAC Representative Appointment

*****Charter School Representative Appointment

**UCAT Representative

****USBA Advisory Representative Appointment

FALCON RIDGE ACADEMY

OWNERSHIP

Owner of Record Centers for Adolescent Recovery & Education (C•A•R•E)

ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF

Melanie Habibian..... Executive Director
Ryan Tingey..... Program Director
Dr. Carolle Bell.....Clinical Director

School Administration

Joette Hayden..... Principal

Counseling

Brian Pace Counselor

Support Staff

Steve Barrick	Summer Downward	Evelyn Ishom
Rachel Clines	Nale Fakahua	Karen Slack
Steven Demille	Lorneta Ferguson	Chiloe Wagner

Faculty

Megan Anderson	Daniel Lundell	Leah Wilson
Danyale Blackmore	Leisa Selden	

FALCON RIDGE ACADEMY

MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission at Falcon Ridge Academy is to help students acquire and build a strong foundation of knowledge that will enable each individual to succeed both academically and socially.

BELIEF STATEMENTS

- All students have the right to be treated with respect and caring.
- All students can succeed and learn when given the appropriate academic and behavioral support.
- Curriculum needs to be modified to best meet the learning styles of our students.
- Educational planning should be student driven and supported by the educational team.
- All students can grow socially and become better prepared to contribute to society.

DESIRED RESULTS FOR STUDENT LEARNING (DRSLs)

1. Problem Solving
2. Communication

Date of visit: March 20, 2012

MEMBERS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Robert Stillwell, Northwest Accreditation Commission and USOE Accreditation
Consultant, Visiting Team Chairperson

Katherine Whitekind, Sunrise RTC, Hurricane, Utah

Kathleen Wagner, Millcreek High School, Washington School District

VISITING TEAM REPORT

FALCON RIDGE ACADEMY

CHAPTER 1: SCHOOL PROFILE

Falcon Ridge Academy is a private residential treatment center for girls, located in Virgin, Utah. The girls come primarily from throughout the United States, with some international students. The average age of the students is 15 years. The recommended length of stay is 9-12 months. Two hallmarks of the program are Equine Therapy and Positive Peer Culture.

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

During the past six years, the Personal and Social Responsibility DRSL was fully institutionalized.

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

The school should continue to implement school-wide assessments to monitor student progress on Problem Solving and Communication DRSLs.

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

The school's self-study was well organized. It was complete, and fairly showed what has been accomplished and what the next steps are for implementing the school improvement plan.

Suggested Areas for Further Inquiry:

- See the recommendations section below.

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?*

Since the last accreditation visit, the DRSLs for Falcon Ridge Academy have been collaboratively revised to include all areas of learning in the school. Most notable is the inclusion of DRSLs in the equine therapy sessions. The addition of monthly student/teacher meetings has also added value to setting educational goals within the existing DRSLs and beliefs statements.

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

The mission statement and beliefs are closely aligned to the DRSLs in empowering students with a voice in their education.

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

The indicators used to measure school's progress in achieving the DRSLs are:

- Monthly meetings with teachers and students.
- School-wide implementation of writing using a common rubric.
- DRSL student handbook with a goal-setting component.
- Student and teacher scoring using the DRSL student handbook rubric.

- 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 mission statement, beliefs, and DRSLs are evident in the school culture through the implementation of student-directed achievement meetings, PPC structure and meetings, cross-curricular teaching and collaboration, and other opportunities for student learning outside of the classroom.

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?*

Through collection of program data, areas of limitation were identified. These areas were then addressed inclusively by the staff. By implementing such programs as Life Skills, learning the curriculum was brought in line with the Utah Core Curriculum and Utah Life Skills.

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

One notable area of student engagement is the inclusion of learning styles into the curriculum. Also observed were hands-on activities and the use of white boards, essential questions, and creative interpretations in class.

- 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 teaching staff works collaboratively to focus on the DRSLs by using a common rubric for teacher/student meetings, as well as a school-wide emphasis on writing using the Six Traits of Writing rubric. The integration of PPC is also an important component.

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

Data-driven decision making was stated as a limitation in the report. Therefore, this year data is being collected to target specific areas of improvement instead of just showing strengths and limitations. This will lead to improved student access to learning outcomes.

Instruction:

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

A wide variety of instructional strategies are used in the classrooms. Teachers are planning activities to include all learning styles, as well as classroom accommodations for IEPs. Some of those observed included white boards in math classes, book-in-a-day in English classes, and hands-on activities such as creating booklets.

- 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?*

DRSLs are posted in each classroom by the students. Educational goals are set each month, centered on the identified DRSL. Life skills are included in every lesson.

- 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?*

Professional development is centered on the development of effective writing programs and the common core requirements. Consistent team collaboration meetings are held to review curriculum and discuss future training needs as well as student needs.

- 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 competent in their subject areas and the common core. They are also current in instructional methods and include a variety of classroom structures to engage students.

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

Technology integration is on the list of classroom needs. The future plan is to improve existing technology, and to implement iPad technology for teachers this year and for students in the future. Some computer assessments are in place now, such as the UTIPS assessments.

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?*

School-wide performance standards are based on the rubrics designed for measuring cross-curricular writing assignments and DRSLs. Achievement data is used by all teachers. These rubrics clearly state the expectations.

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

The school process of monthly meetings with each student is an equitable assessment of the achievement of academic expectations.

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

Data is currently being used to assess success, but is being refined to better show targeted improvement in academics.

- 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?*

Teachers collaborate quarterly to evaluate progress and needs, and to share training highlights. Assessments are also based around the learning styles of the students and are developed through department collaboration.

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

The total school program, as well as staff and directors, use the DRSL rubric that was created. An example of this is the DRSL equine program.

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 Principal/Director of Education promotes quality instruction in a variety of ways. Each spring and fall she obtains the textbook adoption samples that the USOE committee has considered, and provides them to her teachers to consider and review. If they like a particular program, further purchases are made. Teachers have also had the opportunity to receive training on the new common core, and will also attend the Common Core Academy this summer. Small class sizes (12 maximum) also support teaching and learning. iPads for teachers have just been obtained, and Smart Boards will arrive this summer to enable teachers to utilize better technology with the students. Professional development is provided every three months, along with PPC (Positive Peer Culture) weekly training for teachers and staff. The clinical equine program also links with the DRSLs and the language arts program to provide classes rich in both content and hands-on experience.

- 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?*

Effective decisions are made in monitoring student progress and achievement based upon data from the school's NSSE (National Survey of Student Engagement), SAT scores, and UTIPS scores, as well as chapter/unit test scores in the different subject areas. From this data the school can decide what needs to be done to support instruction. Upon admission, students complete an academic evaluation that includes an assessment measure. If there are no accurate and adequate academic testing scores from the prior 12 months for a student, then she is give the Woodcock Johnson III Tests of Achievement, cognitive testing, or both, and these scores assist with placement and curriculum. At the present time, 73 percent of students have been assessed using the WJIII.

- c) *To what extent does the school leadership provide skillful stewardship by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and allocation and use of resources at the school for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment which aligns with the school goals, DRSLs, and school improvement?*

The school leadership provides skillful stewardship in seeing that the clinical, academic, and residential programs are well managed and in alignment with the goals, DRSLs and school improvement plan by having each submit yearly its long-term goals, including a breakdown of financial cost sheets, to the executive director. They plan a year in advance with their requests, and provide an explanation of the purpose and use of the requested items with how they tie in to the DRSLs. This year's submissions included the long-term goal of obtaining iPads for the teachers and a

short-term goal of obtaining copies of the book *The Hunger Games* for students. Teachers are given at least \$500 a year for teaching supplies. Chiloe Wagner, the office manager, handles all daily expenses.

- 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?*

The school leadership empowers the entire school community by having the clinical, residential, and academic faculty/staff meet every day at 1:00 p.m. to collaborate on the specific needs of the girls. The executive director provides the education director with the ability and choice to try new ideas. In turn, the education director does not want to micromanage others, and instead fosters a sense of empowerment across the board.

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

The formal system Falcon Ridge Academy has to assist students in achieving the school-wide expectations includes having Karen Slack as the girls' case manager, who sees to the needs of each student (including both daily needs and arranging events such as doctor appointments), and also sees to their individual treatment plan. The students' core teachers help students create daily short- and long-term learning goals connected to the DRSLs.

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?*

Falcon Ridge Academy has an SIP (School Improvement Plan), with supporting action plans outlined in the self-study. Monthly SIP meetings and quarterly reviews of SIP goals are held with professional development collaboration teams. For each action plan the school has included a connection to the DRSLs, a goal statement, outlined evidence of need, and detailed steps to achieve the action plan. They have also identified the materials/resources needed, persons responsible, and how the action plan will be evaluated. The ultimate goal of the SIP is to help students gain greater success and self-confidence in school. The SIP team does this by taking raw data and turning it into usable goals to increase the educational opportunities at school.

- 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?*

Falcon Ridge Academy builds skills and the capacity for improvement in professional development by supporting the school's goals and the needs of teachers holding weekly PPC (Positive Peer Culture) training with teachers and staff for 1-2 hours. Teachers are provided with quarterly professional development training. This has included or will include some of the following:

- Speakers from Southern Utah University
- Autism Conference at SUU in April 2012
- Group book studies, such as the recent book *Fires in the Mind*
- Differentiated Instruction Conference in July 2012 in Las Vegas

At times the school has also collaborated with other school faculties/staff from Red Rock Canyon School in St. George and Moon Ridge in Cedar City.

- 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 new/revised school-wide action plan appears adequate in addressing the critical areas of follow-up, as some goals were completed successfully and others have adapted and grown with the school. There appears to be sufficient commitment to the action plans. Principal Hayden shared that the school has created the conditions to support the action plans so that all faculty/staff members are part of the collaboration

in the program. According to the school's SIP: "The School Improvement Plan is one of constant evaluation and growth. It is dynamic, and always has the potential to shift as our student population may change. Our responsibility is to serve our students, and to help define and create the opportunities that will allow them to progress and excel."

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

The extent to which the school supports productive change and continuous improvement is seen at the top, as the administration provides support for the students' various needs (clinical, residential and academic) and then to enables all to have a voice about how plans are succeeding or need revising. At times what they try might fail, so they revamp and revise and try again. An example of this is what the school has done with its DRSLs handbook for students. The opinion was expressed that everything goes back to PPC—which is all about "your voice" and looking to "self" to solve problems—as they work to carry out their SIP plan and even to assist with staff/faculty problems.

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

Significant progress that has been made in implementing the original action plan since the last full visit. Falcon Ridge Academy has continued with its SIP, and some goals were completed successfully, while others have adapted and grown. The school has added additional in-house elective courses not previously offered, such as art and Zumba dance classes. The Utah Life Skills handbook became part of teachers' regular instruction and was moved from "in progress" to "completed." The school has made the PPC program ongoing and integrated it with academics and residential treatment. The Effective Communication DRSL has evolved and adapted to focus on writing skills and college readiness. Stakeholders are always looking at the needs of students and the school while revisiting the DRSLs on a regular basis to look for areas of improvement.

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

The significant progress the school has made in addressing the major recommendations of the previous Visiting Team is as follows:

Falcon Ridge Academy's school profile provides follow-up studies on students who have been through the school's program. New library materials have been purchased and accounts have been set up with Follett Educational Book Services and Scholastic Book Clubs. Continuous collaboration is embraced, as seen in the partnership between the clinical and academic departments to combine some equine work with the teaching of the language arts department. Professional development for specific needs has been supported as teachers are encouraged to find development

opportunities within their content area, as well as quarterly training on curriculum needs and behaviors in the classroom.

CHAPTER 5: COMMUNITY BUILDING

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

The Visiting Team commends the staff for the high level of cooperation and mutual support among the different parts of the total program.

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

The school has used BYU Independent Study Courses to extend offerings to students.

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

The school has embraced the culture of continuous improvement. The self-study process is ongoing, and the school has clear action plans to continue the process.

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

The school is very active in the community. The girls give service to their community in several outgoing ways. Beyond that, the complete and thorough 2012 self-study will be shared with current and prospective parents.

CHAPTER 6: MAJOR COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Commendations:

- The Visiting Team commends Falcon Ridge Academy for the high level of cooperation among the therapeutic, equine, and residential and education components of the total program.
- The Visiting Team commends Falcon Ridge teachers for their use of a wide range of strategies to meet the individual needs of their students.

- The Visiting Team commends Falcon Ridge academy for the educational leadership of Joette Hayden.

Recommendations:

- The Visiting Team recommends that Falcon Ridge Academy continue to implement school-wide assessments, such as the Six Traits common scoring rubric for writing across the curriculum.
- The Visiting Team recommends that Falcon Ridge Academy expand its math program to include a full-time teaching position. It is noted that the current position is increasing from three to four days per week. The students shared with the Visiting Team their desire for more time with the math teacher.
- The Visiting Team recommends that Falcon Ridge Academy expand its Independent Studies offerings.
- The Visiting Team recommends that Falcon Ridge Academy expand opportunities for using technology in the classrooms.