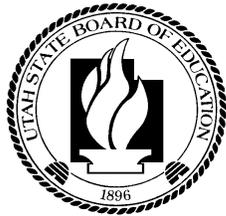


**The Report of the
Accreditation Visiting Team**

**Fieldstone Academy
682 South Main Street
Gunnison, Utah 84634**

March 27, 2012



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Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-4200**

Fieldstone Academy
682 South Main Street
Gunnison, Utah 84634

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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, March 27, 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 Fieldstone 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 Jefry Anderson is also commended.

The staff and administration are congratulated for their desire for excellence at Fieldstone 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 Fieldstone Academy

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State Superintendent
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*Board of Regents Appointments

*** CMAC Representative Appointment

*****Charter School Representative Appointment

**UCAT Representative

****USBA Advisory Representative Appointment

FIELDSTONE ACADEMY

OWNERSHIP

Marv and Marie Forsythe..... Owners of Record

ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF

School Administration

Jefry Anderson..... Principal
John Forsythe..... Assistant Principal
Stew ShaverConsulting principal

Counseling

Andy Peterson.....Consulting Counselor

Support Staff

Chris Forsythe
Marv Forsythe

Faculty

Jefry Anderson
Thomas Bore
Ann Davis
Brian Davis (consulting)
Tammy Hansen
Lars Johnson (consulting)
Stacey Whitmore (summer)

FIELDSTONE ACADEMY

MISSION STATEMENT

To provide a top education to students of strong scholastic promise who are struggling in their middle and high school careers. To provide time, skills, training and individual attention sufficient to resurrect hope, and belief in their own potentials. To return our students to public schools or colleges with abilities, confidence and knowledge sufficient to succeed both scholastically and in their interactions with others.

BELIEF STATEMENTS

- Student's self-concept impacts their learning and is enhanced by positive relationships with staff, peers and community members.
- Each student is important as an individual and can both learn and succeed.
- Students will learn best when in small classes and when given one-on-one instruction and tutoring.
- The responsibility of providing a positive academic experience is shared among the entire Fieldstone community.
- School-wide communication and cooperation are essential for student success.
- Multiple methods of teaching are required to reach all students.
- Students must be trained in a behavior before it can be expected of them.

DESIRED RESULTS FOR STUDENT LEARNING (DRSLs)

1. Students will demonstrate basic competency in reading, writing and mathematics.
2. Students will demonstrate attributes of dependability, responsibility, integrity, caring, cooperation and teamwork.

Date of visit: March 27, 2012

MEMBERS OF THE VISITING TEAM

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

Joette Hayden, Education Director, Falcon Ridge Academy, Virgin, UT

VISITING TEAM REPORT

FIELDSTONE ACADEMY

CHAPTER 1: SCHOOL PROFILE

Fieldstone Academy is a co-educational residential boarding school located in Gunnison, UT. The boys reside at the school; the girls reside with staff members off site. The school currently serves students from throughout the United States and foreign countries in grades 9-12, but will enroll younger students when appropriate.

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

Many changes have taken place at Fieldstone over the past two years. The school has moved into a former elementary school that has undergone renovations, so that one wing serves as boys' dormitories. Since the last self-study two years ago, the school has changed DRSLs. The new DRSLs are appropriate for the setting, but are too new to have had data collected or to be in any way institutionalized.

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

The next self-study should include student performance data on the DRSLs and show pre- and post TABE results.

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

Fieldstone Academy did the right thing by consulting an experienced principal who guided them in re-selecting their DRSLs. The school has also lined up a school counselor on a consulting basis. These changes were too recent to show data, but the groundwork has been laid to improve the overall direction of the school over the long term.

Suggested Areas for Further Inquiry:

- Collect and report TABE results and show trends school-wide.
- Collect and report student achievement data to show progress on DRSLs.

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?*

Over the past year, the school was advised to revise and refine the mission, beliefs, and DRSLs. It is clear that an effort has been made to involve input from teachers and administrators within the facility. It was reported by the administration of the school that input was obtained through surveys, staff members, and collaborative input.

DRSLs regarding competency and responsibility were chosen to be areas of focus for the school and its students, and these areas of need are also reflected in the mission and beliefs that the school has developed.

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

The school's mission and belief statements were revised over the past year, and they show a commitment to student learning and achievement. The belief statements focus on student responsibility, cooperation, communication within the school community, and continuous improvement of staff and instruction.

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

As previously stated, the school's DRSLs have recently been revised and are included in the school's action plan, to be implemented over the coming years.

In the current self-study, there was very little information provided in the "profile" section, or in other sections that described any measures that have taken place over the past three years to monitor progress or growth. This is a definite area in need for improvement, as recognized by both the Visiting Team members and the staff within the school. Without indicators and a process in place to collect this data, the school goals will not effectively serve the purpose of improving student achievement.

In speaking with teachers and administrators, it is clear that the means for collecting and analyzing individual student data for other DRSLs have yet to be firmly established. This should include departments and teachers planning ways to explicitly teach and assess the DRSLs in each classroom. Data from future assessments can then be used to improve the instructional program.

- 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?*

It was discussed and recommended by the Visiting Team that the school's newly revised mission, beliefs and DRSL statements be used to develop a comprehensive school improvement plan. Evidence of some school improvement planning was located on pages 39-42 of the self-study, but this proposed planning did not include the basic elements of a complete school improvement plan (with action steps, timeline, persons responsible, etc.). It is vital that this process include a commitment from all members of the administration, staff and faculty to be held accountable for its implementation. Future visits should yield evidence of the degree to which the plan, including DRSLs, has been successfully implemented into the school culture.

The Visiting Team recommends that the school improvement plan be developed to represent the needs of the school and be followed with consistency and care.

Curriculum:

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

The Visiting Team observed that Fieldstone Academy demonstrated evidence of coursework alignment with the Utah Core Curriculum. The academic administration, as well as the teachers on campus, have developed a full range of course offerings that are reflective of the requirements and standards based upon each of the core areas. The core teachers observed were able to verbalize and then demonstrate how they use the core in the day-to-day teaching. As the academic model involves a blend of both direct instruction and independent study work, students feel as though they are getting a good balance of educational delivery. Updated syllabus information, with evidence of core alignment (such as curriculum mapping), was not provided and did not appear to be in place or evident. This would be very beneficial in providing future evidence of core alignment to accompany classroom observation.

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

The Visiting Team observed a curriculum that engaged most students in inquiry, problem solving, and higher-order thinking. Teaching and class time occurs in small group settings where students have opportunity to receive individual attention as well as collaborate together. Problem solving was emphasized as evident in the social studies classroom, during an observation in which students were discussing current events and the teacher provided insightful questioning and prompting for students to come up with solutions to certain social dilemmas.

It was noted that additional teaching opportunities and learning situations could be enhanced by additional planning and completion of alternate educational experiences, such as field trips and other community education involvement. This would be done with collaboration and support by the administration and staff.

- 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 observed that the teaching staff at Fieldstone Academy would benefit from increased collaboration on development of school DRSLs, and that the school is still working to find tools of measurement and data collection to track progress and monitor effectiveness. Current testing (TABE) is just now being implemented, and no data was evident yet to show its effect on school curriculum. There was no assessment data listed in the self-study or profile to show adequate growth and progress of students, and there was no evidence of consistency in assessment. It is recommended that current classroom information be used to collect additional informal data to support the DRSLs of the school, and the addition of rubrics, surveys, and other data collection tools would be helpful in the evaluation of DRSL growth.

A sense of caring and concern for each student and his/her needs was present in the time spent with students and staff. The defined program and curriculum support the development of contributing citizens, but lack the longitudinal study or data to give evidence as to long-term success.

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

The Visiting Team observed, to some extent, that the staff members of Fieldstone Academy are using assessments to drive instruction. Students are expected to complete individual course assessments (as defined by the teachers in the school), but there has been no uniformity of testing or testing used to look at long-term growth. The school is now just beginning to use the TABE to help place students in appropriate courses, and to help with levels of instruction for the teachers.

The staff members of Fieldstone Academy want all students to learn and be successful. There appears to be a desire to improve in this area by all teachers interviewed.

Instruction:

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

Within different classrooms, the Visiting Team observed a myriad of instructional strategies being used for student learning. All teachers observed were using methods of small group instruction, direct teaching, independent study time, and group discussion. This was a positive aspect of the classrooms visited, and the students involved seemed to be engaged, learning, and satisfied with the different types of instruction being offered.

The Visiting Team discussed with and recommended to the teachers who were observed that the design and selection of instructional strategies continue to be based on the essential knowledge and skills for student learning, as identified by the state of Utah and common standards aligned therein.

- 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?*

Each department has discussed and adopted “emerging” strategies for instruction that support the desired DRSLs and the way they will work within each department. Once again, since the DRSLs are new and have been redesigned, it appears that this discussion is just now taking place, and that the need for future planning in this area is great. The school is working on creating the capacity for explicitly teaching the identified DRSL in every classroom.

The Visiting Team did not find a direct link to the DRSLs, and discussed the need to have steps identified within each of the action steps (in the SIP) that are directly aligned with improving student learning.

- 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?*

There was not an formal professional development plan in place for the teachers at Fieldstone Academy, and this is an area that can be further developed to help teachers improve and align instructional strategies with the DRSLs and SIP plan. Individual teachers have proceeded with professional development in their core content areas to facilitate licensing needs and enhance teaching opportunities within the school.

Effective classroom management and organizational strategies are used to maximize students’ academic engaged time. The school and classrooms have created a positive academic learning climate.

- d) *To what extent are teachers proficient in their content area, knowledgeable about current research on effective instructional approaches, and reflective on their own practices?*

The Visiting Team found that not all teachers in the core subject areas are licensed in their respective teaching areas, but the school has made a verbal commitment to make this a priority and obtain teachers with current licensure and proficiency in their teaching area. There are a number of teachers with advanced degrees and learning experiences. The Visiting Team identified varied instructional approaches, including hands-on instruction, small group work, student reports and teaching, and teacher-promoted questioning and inquiry.

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

One of the strengths of Fieldstone Academy is that the school has a functional student computer lab that can be used for classroom instruction and for individual student learning activities. There was at least one computer for every student currently on campus.

Further integration of technology into the classroom would be encouraged and could be addressed in the upcoming professional development plan for teachers and education staff.

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 observed that the TABE is now being used as the school-wide assessment, and that individual classroom assessment varies by teacher and classroom.

Due to the private status of the school, there are no state testing requirements. ACT and SAT prep and testing (at local testing site) are used as needed and as offered. The teachers assess students on a regular basis through informal observation. Additional informal assessment data would be helpful in building goals and profile data. There is an adequate level of mastery expected, and students have the opportunity for re-teaching and extra time as needed to achieve this mastery. The teachers also collaborate and express student-specific expectations through their weekly meetings and daily contact.

- 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 observed that Fieldstone Academy has compiled some data obtained from the ACT and SAT testing, but has yet to assess that data into useable information to drive achievement or increase effective teaching. No other assessment or testing data was made available in the self-study. This is an area that needs to be improved, and immediate attention given to start collecting data as the school uses the TABE or another school-wide assessment. Fieldstone Academy students are actively engaged in daily coursework, with self-paced assessments and weekly and monthly expectations set by the core teacher. They are required to re-learn standards and concepts as necessary to meet the minimum mastery requirement.

The Visiting Team also observed the ability of students to graduate from either their home high school with their diploma or from Fieldstone Academy, as appropriate (although the latter is reported to be not as common), and the school has encouraged to use this graduation data to provide additional information to indicate the extent of school-wide and individual progress.

- 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 observed that Fieldstone Academy has a professional staff devoted to the success of the school and the success of each student in meeting the school's academic expectations. Once again, data collection has been lacking, but is encouraged as the school implements new school-wide DRSLs and the school improvement plan. Additional data obtained through increased academic counseling and career planning would be beneficial in helping the school to develop a more well rounded profile and an overview of who the school serves and the school's changing needs.

The school has recently hired a part-time counselor, who will be offering some educational guidance to students attending and enrolling in the school.

- 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 observed that the teachers at Fieldstone Academy participate in some individual professional development programs, but there is not yet a plan in place for the school teaching staff as a whole. It is highly encouraged to plan continual and ongoing professional development to allow teachers time for collaboration and discussion of school goals. Additional time and planning is recommended to enhance student assessment strategies and to increase opportunities for students to display mastery of content knowledge in the classroom. Currently, student assessment is mainly measured using individual teacher grading and daily classroom observation. Development of course syllabi in conjunction with core standards would help provide a link between student expectations and the mastery required. Some evidence of informal "portfolio" assessment was observed, and discussions took place on how to further develop and use this as a tool to monitor student growth.

- 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 believes that the DRSLs identified for Fieldstone Academy's education department are now more functional than in previous visits, and need to be aligned with measurement guidelines and a specific action plan for each DRSL. Initial positive collaboration is present, and all teachers and administration involved in the school goals are striving for student success.

Discussion on the purpose and need for the school improvement plan was part of the visit, and it was advised that each DRSL have a defined action plan with steps to promote continued growth of the school and its students. The Visiting Team observed that the school is emerging in its knowledge of how to track and assess DRSLs, and that good discussion is taking place on immediate steps to start this process in identifying scoring tools.

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 school for the changes made to increase knowledgeable school leadership, including the hiring of Stew Shaver to work in conjunction with the current academic leadership to increase support of quality instruction and data collection as it relates to student learning. The Visiting Team has confidence that the school will be successful in its development and implementation of its school action plans if it continues to maintain a positive, strong leadership.

The Visiting Team recommends that, in preparation for the next accreditation visit, stakeholder groups be involved earlier in the process, and that the school take a more active role in involving teachers, parents and students in the focus group process.

- b) *To what extent does the school leadership employ effective decision making that is data-driven, research-based, and collaborative to monitor progress in student achievement and instructional effectiveness?*

The Visiting Team did not observe evidence that effective decision making was data-driven, research-based, and collaborative. We discussed the need for this to be a part of the next self-study and, more importantly, a part of the ongoing school discussion looking at patterns of student achievement.

- 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 Visiting Team was able to see the positive changes in the use of resources that have enhanced student learning in the new building that was purchased to be a permanent home for Fieldstone Academy.

The school administration has provided resources for teachers in the form of organized classrooms, a functioning library, a working computer lab, and other potential areas (currently) under construction and remodeling) that will enhance effective learning experiences for students.

- 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 Visiting Team found evidence that the school's recent leadership was successful in its efforts to empower the school learning community in the collaborative process

that was used in the development of the self-study. Although it appears that many of the main components of the self-study are new or still emerging, the added leadership provided by hiring a mentor principal and the school's continued dedication to staying on this path of improvement are promising. Interviews with members of the school leadership team and teachers suggest that the contributions made and the feedback received were acknowledged and valued, and will be a continuing part of the school improvement meetings.

- 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 Visiting Team found little evidence that this has been happening in the past, but there is evidence that a solution is in place for future student planning with the hiring of a school counselor. The Visiting Team recognizes and commends the school for the proposed changes in this area.

The Visiting Team believes that, by providing time for each student to review transcript information and class requirements and to work on current and transition goal planning, student achievement will be affected in a positive manner.

School Services:

This standard is dealt with in the school's NWAC 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?*

Fieldstone Academy did use the advised resources to prepare its 2012 self-study. The school was working with a two-year term of accreditation, during which many positive changes have taken place. The physical changes in the school have taken place over about a year and a half. The leadership changes in the school are too new to show results, but the self-study was much improved over the 2010 report, and important groundwork has been laid for positive school improvement.

- 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?*

Fieldstone Academy needs to put a teacher professional development plan in place. Training for the past two years has been geared to preparing the new self-study. The next steps for teachers should be focused on assessment.

- c) *To what extent is the new/revised school-wide action plan adequate in addressing the critical areas for follow-up and is there sufficient commitment to the action plan, school-wide and system-wide?*

The Visiting Team and the Fieldstone administration and teachers are in agreement that the new action plan should start with assessment. In the 2012 self-study, the school identifies this as “quantifying student performance and progress.”

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

It is plainly observable that the school is improving; it has made a large commitment by purchasing a new building.

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

The main emphasis from the last full visit was to become knowledgeable of the accreditation standards. The 2012 self-study is an improvement over the 2010 self-study in both process and content.

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

All five recommendations from first full team visit have been addressed. It is too soon to see the results of the recent addition of a consulting school counselor. The new DRSLs have measureable indicators, but have not been in place long enough to show data.

CHAPTER 5: COMMUNITY BUILDING

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

There is strong teamwork within the school. Fieldstone's staff is relatively small in numbers and works closely accommodating the needs of students.

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

The school needs to increase the number of choices available for elective classes. This can be accomplished through independent studies.

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

The teachers have been involved with the self-study. The addition of the consulting principal has helped them focus on measureable learning outcomes.

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

Within the school, the school improvement plan is known by all employees. It will be at the discretion of the owners how their plan will be presented to current and prospective parents.

CHAPTER 6: MAJOR COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Commendations:

- The Visiting Team commends Fieldstone Academy for acquiring a permanent home for the school. Much work has been done to refurbish the building.
- The Visiting Team commends Fieldstone Academy for showing evidence of improvement by hiring a consulting principal, a counselor, and mentor teachers.
- The Visiting Team commends Fieldstone Academy for the dedication of the teachers, who work very hard to meet the needs of their students.

Recommendations:

- The Visiting Team recommends that Fieldstone Academy develop a professional development plan for teachers.
- The Visiting Team recommends that Fieldstone Academy teachers use departmental analysis findings to drive DRSL progress.
- The Visiting Team recommends that Fieldstone Academy use assessments to drive instruction.
- The Visiting Team recommends that Fieldstone Academy develop a plan for serving special education students.
- The Visiting Team recommends that Fieldstone Academy continue to make use of the consulting principal and counselor.
- The Visiting Team recommends that Fieldstone Academy hire licensed teachers.
- The Visiting Team recommends that Fieldstone Academy offer all courses required for graduation.