The Report of the
Accreditation Visiting Team

Hurricane High School

345 West Tiger Blvd.
Hurricane, Utah 84737

April 13-14, 2011

Utah State Office of Education
250 East 500 South
P.O. Box 144200
Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-4200

THE REPORT OF THE
VISITING TEAM REVIEWING

Hurricane High School

345 West Tiger Blvd
Hurricane, Utah 84737

April 13-14, 2011

UTAH STATE OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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State Superintendent of Public Instruction

DIVISION OF
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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 13-14, 2011, 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 Hurricane High School is commended for the time and effort devoted to studying and evaluating the various facets of the total program and to preparing the materials used by the Visiting Team. The excellent leadership given by Principal Kevin Pedersen is also commended.

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

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*Board of Regents Appointments
** UCAT Representative
*** CMAC Representative Appointment
**** USBA Advisory Representative Appointment
***** Charter School Representative Appointment

12/28/2010

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David Gardner ..... CTE Director

HURRICANE HIGH SCHOOL

ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF

School Administration

Kevin T. Pedersen ..... Principal
Larry Johnson ..... Vice Principal
Jody Rich ..... Vice Principal/Activities Director

Counseling

Sharae David ..... Counselor
Colin Metzger ..... Counselor
Dana Stratton ..... Counselor

Support Staff

Trudy Abbott ..... Purchasing Secretary
Shelly Singleton ..... Attendance Secretary
Tacy Wright ..... Finance Secretary
Jason Despain ..... Resource Officer
Megan Kent ..... Lunch Accounts
Steve Arnold ..... Head Custodian
Catrina Anderson ..... Custodian
Leon Gubler ..... Custodian
Linda Iorg ..... Custodian
Megan Kent ..... Lunch Manager
Megan Kent ..... Lunch Accounts
Jeanette Campbell ..... Registrar
Dana Leavitt ..... Registrar
Linda Evans ..... Resource Aide
Kathy Hurst ..... Resource Aide
Lynne Barnum ..... Writing Lab Aide
Helen Buist ..... Media Aide
Traci Christiansen ..... Media Aide

Faculty

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Bethany Baker
Kori Bowler
Cynthia Browning
Gonnie Buell
Ken Cahoon
Mark Christensen
Summer Cornelius
Lisa Crane

Dave Cullimore
Dustin Dayley
Lane Dilworth
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Richard Hill
Chris Homer
Marcus Homer
Ron Horrocks
Tera Houston
Michelle Imlay
Tral Johnson
Lewis Jones
Steve Jurca
Ron Kelsey
Shelly Kidd-Thomas
Daniel McKeehan
Rich Mildenhall
Phillip Moore
Scott Morrise
Jeff Parker
Steve Pearson
Boyd Prince
Ron Quilter
Mary Janice Richmond
Jeanie Roberts
Melanie Suman
Leslie Taylor
Debra Thorton
Dan Westwood

HURRICANE HIGH SCHOOL

MISSION STATEMENT

Building a positive school community, which develops adaptable, compassionate citizens who are independent, critical thinkers.

BELIEF STATEMENTS

- The school must strive for continual improvement.
- Parental support and involvement is critical.
- Students will rise to meet school expectations.
- Student learning increases when the environment is safe and stimulating.
- Student responsibility, both academic and social, is essential to student achievement.
- Students have different emotional and intellectual needs.
- Students benefit from real-life and hands-on learning experiences.
- Continual assessment is employed to improve teaching and learning.

DESIRED RESULTS FOR STUDENT LEARNING (DRSLs)

1. A Life Long Learner – capable of using basic academic skills and utilizing critical thinking for reasoning and problem solving as well as adapting the learned information to changing situations.

2. A Personally and Socially Responsible Citizen – demonstrating character skills such as integrity and accountability, being a global citizen, while also showing tolerance and respect for diversity.

3. An Effective Communicator – able to express thoughts and ideas through verbal, written, and artistic media, as well as being able to listen, read, and comprehend the communication of others.

4. An Employable Citizen – well prepared to obtain and keep employment in fields of interest and capable of changing careers and seeking additional training as needed.

Date of visit*:* April 13-14, 2011

MEMBERS OF THE VISITING TEAM

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

Laurie Anderson, Stansbury High School, Tooele County School District

John Childs, Northwest Accreditation Commission, Accreditation Specialist

William Reynolds, Whitehorse High School, San Juan School District

Kathrine Whittekiend, Sunrise Academy

VISITING TEAM REPORT

HURRICANE SCHOOL

CHAPTER 1: SCHOOL PROFILE

Since its establishment, the valley of Hurricane has maintained a rich history of education. Hurricane High School is the public high school located in Hurricane Utah, and serves the surrounding communities of Toquerville, LaVerkin, Virgin, Rockville, Springdale, and Apple Valley. The school has evolved over the years through many variations in the configuration of the building, grade levels and student population. The current location's first phase was completed in 1974, with students commuting between two separate buildings. Currently the school is under construction, with additional classroom space being added to better meet the needs of the student body.

The school currently offers a comprehensive program for its students, including many support programs, clubs, athletics, and extracurricular activities. In addition, Hurricane High School serves as a cornerstone for community involvement through athletics, parades, pageants, service projects and volunteerism.

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

The Visiting Team, through its analysis of the school's profile, observation, and interviews with staff, students, and patrons, found the following:

- The school has incorporated professional learning communities to address school improvement, including the development and use of common assessments to inform instruction and individual student learning needs.
- Data indicates that the school's students generally have low performance in mathematics and high performance in language arts as measured by state CRT assessments.

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

The Visiting Team, through its analysis of the school's profile, observations, and interviews with stakeholder groups, recommend the following:

- Increased use of community members and parents in the decision-making processes involved with the development of the school profile and action plan.
- Inclusion of additional detail in the school's action plan, including specific, measurable steps and actions to be taken and completed.

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

The Visiting Team was confident that the school's self-study developed for the school accreditation accurately reflects their current strengths and limitations. However, the team believes that the school is addressing student learning in additional ways that have not been reflected in the school profile. Information regarding the school's professional learning communities, common assessments in language arts, etc. would provide a more accurate profile of the accomplishments and directions the school is taking.

Suggested Areas for Further Inquiry:

- Involve a wider group of stakeholders on the school's leadership team when it undertakes the accreditation process for the next full accreditation team visit, including the focus group process.

- Provide a professional development plan that is better articulated.

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?*

During the 2007 school year, Hurricane High School reviewed and revised its mission and belief statement through the focus group process. The Visiting Team found evidence that the process was collaborative and involved all major stakeholder groups. The school's mission, beliefs, and DRSLs provide a compelling purpose that supports student learning.

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

The Visiting Team found evidence to support a clear alignment of the school's mission, beliefs and DRSLs. These reflect the school learning community's commitment to meeting the individual needs of every student that attends Hurricane 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 and adopted, and implementation began during the 2010-2011 school year with the "Employable Citizen" and "Effective Communicator (oral)" DRSLs. During the accreditation process, the school created rubrics for each of the DRSLs. The Visiting Team found mixed results from the use of the rubrics to measure student progress.

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 Hurricane High School the mission, beliefs and DRSLs are just beginning to guide the activities, procedures, policies and decisions of the school. The institutionalization of the writing component of the Effective Communicator DRSL implemented by the school provides evidence of the school's efforts in this area. The school's efforts toward implementation of its Employable Citizen DRSL, which is the focus of this year's school improvement efforts, are not as consistent across the school and department, and therefore should remain a focus and be further refined during the immediate future.

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 collaboration on a limited basis throughout departments. Both vertical and horizontal alignment had not been observed in the self-study. The use of the Utah State Core Curriculum was observed in lessons taught throughout the school using Life Skills as designed by the USOE.

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

In the classroom setting, students were observed engaged in instruction. Lessons observed by the Visiting Team included problem-solving strategies in science and math, inquiry in the social sciences, and higher-order thinking skills in the language classes.

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 found that curricula had been developed within departments, but not between departments. Focus on the development of curricula tied to the DRSLs has been attempted but was not fully functional at the time of the visit.

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

The Visiting Team had observed departments working extensively to match instruction to the Utah State Core Curriculum. The intent of each department is to develop a curriculum that addresses the desired learning outcome.

Instruction:

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

Teachers at Hurricane High School employ a variety of teaching strategies in their student lessons. Observations included lecture, peer review, rubrics, assessment, individual work, and the use of technology. Student assignments, which ranged from note taking to performance tasks, correspond to a wide variety of learning styles. Students were actively engaged in learning. Teachers monitored student's work and interacted on a personal basis with their students as the class period progressed.

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 developed strategies for instruction that support the desired DRSLs and how they work within each department. However, the Visiting Team did not find evidence that suggests that the current DRSL, Employable Citizen, has been consistently institutionalized throughout the school or within all departments. Although the school is attempting to create the capacity for explicitly teaching the identified DRSL in every classroom, it has only been partially successful. The school was successful in its implementation of the goal of being an effective communicator (written).

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

The teachers at Hurricane High School are proficient in their content areas. Teachers are current in their approach to teaching and work to include effective methods in their instruction. Department meeting time is used to reflect on

teaching practices and to share ideas regarding instruction that have been effective in other classrooms. The implementation of school DRSLs are also a major topic of discussion during department meetings. District PLC meetings have been useful in creating a wider vision of how to best help students.

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 observed members of the instructional staff of Hurricane High School using a great deal of technology in their educational process. Each teacher has a laptop computer, and many classrooms are equipped with interactive whiteboards. In addition, classrooms have projectors and screens for use during class. Student assignments, such as PowerPoint presentations or the making of videos, are given that require the use of technology for completion. In addition, the school has several labs to ensure student access to computers.

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 found that the staff of Hurricane High School does an excellent job of integrating technology into the curriculum, instruction, and assessments. The administration has done an excellent job of providing the faculty with technology that enhances instruction. Many classrooms have Smart Boards and document cameras that allow the teacher to present the curriculum in a variety of modalities.

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 evidence related to staff-developed classroom assessments but inconsistent evidence of school-wide assessments on school DRSLs. In situations where student assessment was observed (formally or informally), the expectations of student learning were typically defined clearly in terms of explicit performance indicators related to classroom curriculum standards.

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

A review of Hurricane High School's assessment data, at both the school and classroom level, provides evidence that the criteria and performance standards

used to determine the level of student performance are consistently applied on an equitable basis. The assessments are designed to allow all students to demonstrate their knowledge in the areas assessed, and appear to be free of items that favor students of one background or gender over another.

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 evidence that indicates that the school staff understands the importance of using multiple assessments in evaluating student performance. The school administrator has directed the staff to use a wide variety of formal and informal assessments of student learning, based on the state standards, to guide classroom instruction. The school's purpose for assessing student learning appears to include monitoring student progress and improving student learning, not simply measuring the presence or absence of students' achievement of essential knowledge and skills.

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 school has implemented professional learning communities, which have begun to meet on a regular basis. At these meetings, teachers discuss assessments within the department and school. Teachers who teach courses not taught by other staff members within the school meet with other teachers in the district who teach the same course. The Visiting Team commends the school and the staff on these initial efforts, through the professional learning communities, to collaborate in developing and implementing a broad range of student assessment strategies.

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 inconsistent data to suggest there is organizational agreement on the use of a school-wide scoring tool to assess students' progress on the "Employable Citizen" DRSL. The Visiting Team recommends further efforts in developing a school-wide assessment for this area.

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 leadership team is relatively new to this school. The administrators are advocates for teaching and learning. They support and focus upon academics at the school. The Visiting Team believes the administration could promote academics more by validating the teaching and learning of the students through more involvement of stakeholder groups in the 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 has observed evidence that the decisions made by the school leadership are data-driven and research-based. The goals that have been identified in the school's action plan are a direct result of the school profile and the data contained in that profile.

The Visiting Team recommends that the school focus its attention on developing more specific indicators of student proficiency on school-wide DRSLs and collecting consistent, school-wide data that reports student progress toward mastery of those indicators.

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 administration is instrumental in the establishment of a safe school, a place where students want to be. Students are very well behaved and appear to have a high level of pride in their school and school spirit. The Visiting Team was able to identify alignment between the school's use of resources, both fiscal and human, with school goals, DRSLs, and general school improvement efforts. The school administration provides resources for staff members to engage in professional learning activities that directly influence student learning in the areas of need identified in the school profile.

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 observed a difference in perceptions of the extent to which the school leadership empowers the school community and encourages commitment, participation, collaboration and shared responsibility for student learning. The perception of the school administrative team is that they have empowered the faculty. The perception of faculty members is they would like administration to be

more involved with them and would like to be more involved in decisions and the decision-making process.

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 did not observe a formal system for each student to have an assigned faculty member to assist him/her in achieving the school-wide expectations for student learning. However, the school has established an intervention program, called Target that addresses individual student learning needs. Students who are behind in their coursework or have not mastered critical concepts meet for an hour each week with their teachers in the area where the deficiency exists. Students also commented to members of the Visiting Team that teachers were always available before and after school, as well as during the lunch period, to assist them with work they were having difficulty completing or understanding.

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?*

The comprehensive school improvement plan is revised each year. It centers around four goals: curriculum, student achievement, collaboration, school-community relations. Changes have occurred in the focus areas as the school has implemented the DRSLs school-wide and the common assessments have been developed.

b) *To what extent does the school build skills and the capacity for improvement through an aligned and ongoing professional development plan focused on the school's goals for improvement?*

The capacity for improvement is built into the school PLC format. These groups focus on data, department improvement, and implementing the DRSLs. Teachers are trained to collect data and a data specialist is available in the school. The Visiting Team did not observe evidence of an ongoing professional development plan other than the PLCs.

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 action plan for 2010-2011 focuses on the implementation of the DRSL and has added improvement of the math scores. The Visiting Team believes that there could be more depth in the plan statements that help focus on the critical areas of improvement. The commitment to the plan seems sporadic. Some departments are working well and collaboration is taking place, but it is not school-wide.

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

The Visiting Team found significant evidence to suggest that the school involves teachers in a continuous improvement process. Teachers meet to discuss data and ideas to improve student learning. Teachers sent to trainings or outside professional development opportunities are asked to share what was learned. Some instructional strategies shared in this way have been implemented in more than one department.

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

Common assessments for the identified DRSLs have been developed and placed on the web for teacher use. Over the last year the use of these rubrics has increased, and a continued increase is expected. Each department has developed a plan for direct teaching of the DRSLs. Students are aware of the DRSLs and understand their importance.

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

The school has changed the purpose and the way meetings are being held. Monthly faculty meetings are held for school business, and occasionally the principal or staff developer will bring in a professional article to be read and shared in department meetings. Department meetings (PLCs) are used for collaboration, planning, and strengthening the department focus on DRSLs and common assessments. The improvement process is also accomplished through the PLCs' use of data to guide the professional development needs of the school.

CHAPTER 5: COMMUNITY BUILDING

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

The Visiting Team found a lack of participation of the School Community Council as a collaborative force in school-wide decisions. Although conversations with parents show a positive outlook regarding the council's input generally, structure within the council falls short of what is expected from stakeholders within the school community.

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

The school encourages community members and parents to volunteer for extracurricular activities at the school, with sports being emphasized. The Visiting Team also notes a collaborative effort with the community arts program, along with community outreach programs centralized at the school. Performances of community plays, concerts, and general outreach programs use the school as a focal hub for organization. Conversations with community members show a positive attitude toward the school in general.

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

It is apparent to the members of the Visiting Team that the school community members have limited input on decisions made by the school administration. At the time of the current visit, the school profile does show participation by community members and students in surveys and questionnaires along with data collected.

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

Specific usage from the surveys and questionnaires is not apparent in the school profile. The Visiting Team recommends a higher level of stakeholder participation in the decision-making process of the school and the accreditation process in the future.

CHAPTER 6: MAJOR COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Commendations:

- The Visiting Team commends the faculty and staff on the level of commitment and dedication they have to the students who attend Hurricane High School. The staff employs effective instructional strategies that keep students engaged in the learning process. Students commented about the accessibility and willingness of all staff members to address individual student needs.

- The Visiting Team commends the school faculty and staff for their efforts in embedding the school's DRSLs into their daily instruction. The team found extensive data to support the institutionalization of the "Effective Communicator (oral)" DRSL, including the use of the rubric developed through the accreditation process to assess student achievement and progress.

- The Visiting Team commends the school on the establishment of a school climate and culture that support a positive learning environment. In discussion with all stakeholder groups, many focused on the strong sense of community and unity that exists in the school, where student and staff members are kind, respectful, and genuinely care for each other.

Recommendations:

- The Visiting Team recommends the involvement of a more diverse, representative group of stakeholders in the focus group process. Every effort should be made to include parents and students from different ethnic backgrounds, different socioeconomic situations, etc. as the school prepares for the next full accreditation visit.

- The Visiting Team recommends the establishment of a school leadership team that is comprised of faculty members, parents and school administrators. The school's staff developer should be included and is a critical member of the team.

The purpose of the leadership team is to monitor the school's efforts in the future implementation and institutionalization of the remainder of the DRSLs. This would include the use of the school's established rubrics. In addition, the school leadership team should take a leading role in appropriate modifications to the rubrics and improvement plans through direct feedback from staff, students and parents.

- The Visiting Team recommends the use of the entire rubric developed as the means for collection of the data to assess individual student progress. The data should be collected at least twice per school year to give students an indication of the progress they are making on the school's DRSLs. The school should consider a means for saving individual student data over the course of the students' enrollment at Hurricane High School so that they can view their progress over their educational career.