Indian Hills Middle School
1180 East Sanders Road (11600 South)
Sandy, Utah 84094-5664

March 24-25, 2004

THE REPORT OF THE
VISITING TEAM REVIEWING

Indian Hills Middle School
1180 East Sanders Road (11600 South)
Sandy, Utah 84094-5664

March 24-25, 2004

UTAH STATE OFFICE OF EDUCATION

Steven O. Laing, Ed.D.
State Superintendent of Public Instruction

DIVISION OF
STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AND SCHOOL SUCCESS

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FOREWORD

A major purpose of the accreditation process is to stimulate inservice growth and school improvement. Consequently, requirements include not only meeting the standards of the Utah State Office of Education, but also completing a school evaluation every six years.

School evaluation is that effort by the local school staff to take a comprehensive look at the school's program, operation, and effect. The school determines how closely its purposes and philosophy coincide with its actual practices and the degree to which its stated objectives are being reached. It is a three-phased program: (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 24-25, 2004, was conducted because of the school's desire to ensure quality education for all students in the school, and to meet the requirements referred to above.

The entire staff of Indian Hills Middle 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 Stephen Dimond is commended.

The staff and administration are congratulated for the generally fine program being provided for Indian Hills Middle School students, 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 adequately meet the needs of the students of Indian Hills Middle School.

Steven O. Laing, Ed.D.
State Superintendent
of Public Instruction

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JORDAN SCHOOL DISTRICT

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INDIAN HILLS MIDDLE SCHOOL

Administration

Stephen Dimond..Principal
Kathy Anderson .... Assistant Principal
Edy McGee .... Assistant Principal

Counseling

Richard Farley..Guidance Counselor
Raylene Glover ....Guidance Counselor
Kristi Lowe ....School Psychologist

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  Georgia Bruening
  Vicki Helstrom
  Peggy Osoro

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Karen Millenbach	David Selin	Lee Young

INDIAN HILLS MIDDLE SCHOOL

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Indian Hills Middle School is to prepare every student with the knowledge, skills, values, and vision for lifelong success in a changing world while promoting responsible citizenship in a safe, positive, and respectful environment.

BELIEF STATEMENTS

We believe:

- that each student can learn and should be taught effectively taking into account his/her individual learning abilities.

- that each student should be educated in a school environment which encourages analysis and organization of information, development of new skills, and expansion and integration of knowledge.

- the school community should use a variety of appropriate communication skills.

- the school community should use, evaluate and refine multiple strategies to solve problems.

- the school community should practice mutual respect to increase quality education.

- the school community should be charitable, accountable, and respectful.

MOTTO

CARE:
Charitable
Accountable
Respectful
Education

MEMBERS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Nancy Jadallah, Eisenhower Junior High School, Granite School District, Chairperson

Charles F. Bearce, American Fork Junior High School, Alpine School District

Paula Carlson, South Summit Middle School, South Summit School District

Barry Jones, South Ogden Junior High School, Weber School District

Lisa C. Taylor, Roosevelt Junior High School, Duchesne School District

VISITING TEAM REPORT

INDIAN HILLS MIDDLE SCHOOL

CHAPTER 1: SCHOOL PROFILE

Indian Hills Middle School is located in Jordan School District at 1180 East Sanders Road in Sandy City, a suburb of Salt Lake City. Indian Hills Middle School is a grade 7-9 school located in an above-average socioeconomic residential area. The organizational structure of the school is primarily departmental, but plans are in place for the school to move toward teaming, at least in the 7th grade.

Though predominantly Caucasian, Indian Hills Middle School has a minority population of 4 percent, representing students of Hispanic, Black, Asian, Middle Eastern, Native American, Ukrainian, and Polynesian heritage.

Indian Hills opened in August of 1980 with 700 students. Since opening, the school has at times had an enrollment as high 1,500 students, but it currently has an enrollment of 1,227. The building was originally designed with open classrooms but has undergone some cosmetic changes over the past several years, including the addition of walls and removal of banks of lockers.

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

> The school serves a primarily Caucasian population, with a minority population of only 4 percent. During the disaggregation of the school testing data, however, it was noted that the Hispanic group was falling below acceptable performance standards set by the school/district. According to the principal, 56.25 percent (9 of 16) performed at the minimal or partial levels on the CRT in Mathematics; 31.25 percent (5 of 16) performed at the minimal or partial levels on the CRT in Language Arts; and 11.43 percent (3 of 16) performed at the minimal or partial levels on the CRT in Science. The low performance of these students is a concern for the school.

> At first, when analyzing the school climate surveys, the data clearly indicated that school morale was down. However, after meeting with the aggregate groups it became obvious that this was a timing issue.   The administration responded, appropriately, that the staff's morale was indeed in need of attention, but, interestingly enough, the staff's response was that morale was high and the climate positive. The survey was given during a time at which much of the reporting for the accreditation was due, and stress was at an all time high. All interviews confirmed this fact.

There is a small percentage (2%) of ELL students, but these students were the ones who were failing the CRT in Language Arts. The principal noted that discussion had taken place concerning the low performing Hispanic students; from preliminary investigation it appears that students who were born and raised in Utah were doing substantially better than non-Utah born/reared students. Additional investigation needs to occur.

The mobility rate is very low at 5 percent, creating a very stable population. The special education population is 6 percent, or 78 students who receive services, including monitoring status only.

Since 2001, there has been a dramatic drop in disciplinary referrals. The actual drop was from 1,182 referrals in 2002 to 313 (for the first half of the year) in 2004.

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

All agree that the data need to be disaggregated into a user-friendly format that is relevant, and also delivered to the school in a timely fashion.

Suggested Areas for Further Inquiry:

- The data need to be further disaggregated so teachers and school personnel have user-friendly data that can be used to help improve on student performance and achievement.

- The data should be disaggregated in such a way that it can be used to identify specific groups or individuals that are lost in the current configuration.

CHAPTER 2: THE SELF-STUDY PROCESS

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

The entire school community had the opportunity to be involved in the self-study process. All teachers, counselors, staff members, and administrators were actively involved in at least two aspects of the process. All staff members served in a focus group and gave their input regarding their particular focus area. Additionally, all teachers met in their departments and completed a thorough analysis of their departmental effectiveness. It was well noted by all members of the Visiting Team that there was considerable collaboration during this process.

Parents were invited to be members of each focus group. Each focus group reported that at least one parent and one student served on its committee.

The Visiting Team felt it was apparent, after meeting with the different constituency groups, that all were well aware of and included in the process of self-evaluation. The students were also well versed at least in the language of the self-study.

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

The Visiting Team felt that while there are certainly recommendations to be made, to a large extent the self-study accurately reflected the school's current reality, including its strengths and limitations. In a couple of instances, there were many positive programs going on that were not mentioned or noted.

CHAPTER 3: INSTRUCTIONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Indian Hills Middle School's desired results for student learning (DRSLs) are as follows:

1.   **An Effective Communicator** – capable of using oral, written, artistic, mathematical and technological forms of expression to effectively gather, develop and communicate ideas based on all academic curricula.

2.   **A Responsible Citizen** – who takes personal responsibility for improving the quality of life for self and others through participating in charitable, accountable and respectful behaviors such as: honesty, environmental awareness and self-motivation.

3.   **A Resourceful Thinker** – capable of utilizing and adapting to a variety of critical and creative thinking strategies to solve problems both independently and collaboratively.

4.   **A Life Long Learner** – who is learning to actively envision, establish and carry out personal goals, develop a positive work ethic, and persevere in difficult situations while continually striving to push the limits of his or her knowledge and ability.

Shared Vision, Beliefs, Mission, and Goals:

a)   *To what extent did the school facilitate a collaborative process to build a shared vision for the school (mission) that defines a compelling purpose and direction for the school?*

To a large extent the school facilitated the collaborative process, building a shared vision for the school. Indian Hills Middle School has done an excellent job of building collaboration among teachers, administrators, parents, and students throughout the accreditation process, which includes building a shared vision through the mission statement. However, another important component of the school's group of stakeholders is the classified personnel. They also need to be part of the school team in building a shared vision of the school.

b)   *To what extent has the school defined a set of beliefs that reflect the commitment of the administration and staff to support student achievement and success?*

Indian Hills Middle School's belief statements are well thought out, support the mission statement, and guide the DRSLs. The mission statement clearly shows that the administration and staff are committed to student achievement, both academically and socially. The Visiting Team was impressed with the addition of the school motto of C.A.R.E. Not only does Indian Hills Middle School "talk the talk," it also "walks the walk."

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

There is close alignment among the mission, beliefs, and DRSLs. There is a broad knowledge and acceptance of the DRSLs among the staff and stakeholders. The DRSLs are age appropriate and reflect the desire of the total educational community to help the school's students prepare for the future. Members of the Visiting Team heard students referring to the things they were learning as responsible citizens, and as effective communicators.

Curriculum Development:

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)?*

To a great degree, the staff works collaboratively to ensure the curriculum is clearly based on defined standards and the Utah State Core Curriculum. There is much evidence that the staff at Indian Hills Middle School uses various forms of data to drive curriculum design and instruction. The teachers and other staff

members are knowledgeable concerning the Utah State Core Curriculum standards and objectives, and are diligent and thoughtful in meeting them.

Content-specific departments meet frequently to evaluate needs of students and teachers within the department. Teachers know what is being taught within the classes in their department. Departments work together for the good of the students and the school. There is much evidence that seasoned teachers encourage and strengthen those that are new to the profession and guide classroom instruction toward practices that are research-based and data-driven.

One area needing development and implementation is cross-content area collaboration. Although it is happening in a few areas (all media content areas, as well as English and social sciences), cross-content area collaboration needs to move forward. It is noted, however, that the vast majority of teachers are making connections with other content areas. For example, one teacher used a nature walk (which is common with science teachers) as a prompt for poetry writing in his Language Arts class.

The Visiting Team also suggests that Indian Hills Middle School continue to build vertical alignment with the high school in many content areas—not just in world languages and in math, as they are already doing. Vertical alignment should also be implemented with the elementary schools that feed into Indian Hills Middle School.

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?*

The staff of Indian Hills Middle School has done an outstanding job working together to make the DRSLs an integral part of the instruction and climate. Both students and staff know what the DRSLs, are and make reference to them even when not directly learning about them. Ownership of the DRSLs among the stakeholders of the school is very much in evidence, and curricula in every content area and classroom have been developed and implemented.

Quality Instructional Design:

a)   *To what extent does the professional staff design and implement a variety of learning experiences that actively engage students?*

During the two days the Visiting Team spent at Indian Hills Middle School, its members observed some of the school staff using a variety of teaching strategies to enhance student learning. The team observed direct instruction, lab assignments in the science areas, cross-curricular projects in foreign language classes, project-based activities, educational games, cooperative learning, hands-

on (manipulative) activities, and individual student learning. However, in a portion of the classrooms observed, teaching consisted only of direct instruction, followed by independent student work with minimal collaboration. When visiting with students about this practice, the Visiting Team was informed that this type of instruction was occurring in these classrooms almost on a daily basis. Direct instruction for an extended period of time day in and day out is not consisted with the developmental needs of middle-grade students. The Visiting Team noted that some departments (language arts and science, among others) were observed using a variety of "best practice" learning strategies during the block classes, while other departments did not. One recommendation from the Visiting Team would be for the other departments to begin using a greater variety of teaching strategies and styles within their block classes.

As the Visiting Team talked with students, it was noted that some teachers rely heavily on direct instruction and individual student work in their classrooms. The students seem frustrated, because they feel that the only effect of the new block schedule on these teachers is that they now give an increased amount of homework. The Visiting Team does want to note, however, that there are many teachers who have adjusted well to the block program and are implementing best practices in their classrooms.

Students also expressed concern about the number of large projects or assignments that are due at similar times in many of their classes. Communication between departments and teachers would be a solution. The Visiting Team is not recommending that teachers eliminate these projects or assignments, but that they coordinate with each other so that students do not feel overwhelmed.

The Visiting Team compliments the efforts of those teachers who understand and use a wide variety of research-based best practices. The Visiting Team also recognizes that professional development opportunities to make the transition from teaching a 45-minute class to teaching a 72-minute class were offered at the onset of the new block schedule. The staff needs to realize that potential of changing to the block schedule as a way to improve student learning will be wasted if instructional practices don't evolve to match the block schedule. The Visiting Team recommends that the school continue to implement professional development activities to help teachers adapt their teaching strategies to maximize the benefit of the block schedule. It is suggested that Indian Hills Middle School consider professional development opportunities that involve subject-specific ideas for best practices when teaching on a block schedule. It is also suggested that staff consider the use of interdisciplinary projects and cross-curricular planning when investigating best practices.

b) *To what extent does the professional staff employ a variety of instructional strategies to ensure the needs of different learners are met?*

During the visit to Indian Hills Middle School, it was obvious that teachers were willing to make accommodations to meet the needs of all students, whether this involved adjusted seating arrangements, different assignments, opportunities to retest, or pre-written notes. Teachers were aware of student IEP and 504 plans and made adjustments to meet the requirements of the individual students. The peer mentoring program, where students are assigned to help special needs students in regular classrooms, appears to have been not only a successful experience for the special needs students, but also a successful experience for the mentors. The Visiting Team commends the staff for its efforts to meet the needs of all learners and encourages the staff to continue with its efforts, remembering to consider the needs of ELL students.

c)   *To what extent do the professional staff and leadership provide additional opportunities which support student learning?*

The Visiting Team noted that Indian Hills Middle School provides a variety of additional opportunities that support student learning. It was observed and reported that individual teachers are regularly available before and after school to offer additional help for students in need. The media center is also available before and after school, giving students the opportunity to do research and use the media center computer lab. Under the direction of the counseling center, the Peer Leadership Team has implemented an after-school "Peers Helping Peers" tutoring program. The administration and the Counseling Department have created remediation packets in order to give students who have failed an opportunity to relearn needed information. With the change to the block schedule the staff realized that students, specifically the 9th graders, might have a difficult time fitting in all the electives they want. Because of this, summer school classes have been offered to allow the students more opportunities during the school year. The Visiting Team recommends that Indian Hills Middle School continue with the innovative programs that offer students additional opportunities to learn.

Quality Assessment Systems:

a)   *To what extent has the staff developed classroom or schoolwide assessments based on clearly articulated expectations for student achievement?*

Indian Hills Middle School has a system for assessing student success. The Six Traits of Writing system is used by all staff members. Assessment is obvious in the school, and often student work is displayed throughout the building. Each department has its own set of assessments that are adjusted appropriately in each subject or discipline. Rubrics for student work and teacher standards are evident in the school. It is apparent, from the quality of student work displayed in classrooms and throughout the school, that students are not only aware of high standards for work, but utilize them in their projects and assignments.

Schoolwide performance standards are not fully developed, but progress toward that end is noted. The school did develop rubrics for the DRSLs that teachers could use to evaluate students on these outcomes.

It is recommended that Indian Hills Middle School continue to develop standards and rubrics that can be implemented schoolwide.

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

The staff uses traditional formal assessments in the form of tests and quizzes to assess students. Other types of informal assessment are also evident, including PowerPoint presentations, group presentations, video production, and various other products to demonstrate learning. The school is to be commended for the incorporation of a variety of formal assessment methods that are based on best practices and attentive to student learning styles.

The Visiting Team also saw many examples of informal assessment. These examples varied by class but included student oral responses (individual and whole class), teachers checking student work and providing feedback as students were working, students working in groups, etc.

The staff members at Indian Hills Middle School also use the results of standardized tests to guide them in improving their educational product. They state, "Schoolwide assessments (CRTs and SATs) are given for three clearly articulated purposes: to evaluate student learning and adjust instruction to meet the needs of students, to identify strengths and deficits, and to evaluate progress toward Comprehensive School Improvement Plan goals." However, the results of these tests are often not provided to the staff in a timely or useful manner. It is recommended that this issue be addressed, so the staff will have the data it needs to design tools to better help each student achieve.

Greater collaboration within the educational community of Indian Hills Middle School will strengthen the school's ability to further develop consistent, schoolwide assessment expectations.

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

There is evidence of differentiated instruction and assessment at Indian Hills Middle School. Specialized individual student needs are being met based on students' status in special education, ELL, or 504 accommodation programs, and assessments are adjusted accordingly. Not as much is being done for limited English proficient (LEP) students, due to the low number of these students being served. The staff at Indian Hills Middle School has recently noted that a large portion of the non-Utah-native Hispanic population is not performing well on the

CRTs. It is recommended that further study take place and appropriate interventions be implemented to ensure the success of these students and any others who are discovered to need additional support as data is disaggregated.

Leadership for School Improvement:

a) *To what extent does the school leadership promote quality instruction by fostering an academic learning climate and actively supporting teaching and learning?*

To a great extent, the Visiting Team found that the school leadership promotes quality instruction by:

- Supporting the staff members in their efforts to improve their level of instruction by providing professional development as needed.

- Providing the means to participate in professional development activities, either in house or through outside opportunities.

- Being quality instructional leaders.

- Modeling professional behavior.

- Fostering a positive, learning environment.

- Providing supplies, equipment, books and needed materials for students in the classrooms.

- Providing programs to support and reward learning and student improvements.

- Providing time for staff members to work together in a collaborative culture for the improvement of instruction.

The leadership of Indian Hills Middle School has focused its professional development efforts on the implementation of best practices. The staff members have been encouraged to attend seminars, conferences, and other professional development opportunities, and to implement research-based, effective instructional strategies gleaned from these opportunities.

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

To a great extent, leadership at Indian Hills Middle School is based on a shared leadership premise. The principal(s) include staff in the process of decision making and attempt to get input from all constituent groups when making

decisions. During the accreditation process, the action plan/leadership focus group was a representative group including department heads, counselors, administrators, and others. Prior to the accreditation process, there were several groups that met regularly to discuss academic performance, instructional design, and setting. Each of these committees operates individually, always working toward meeting the instructional, academic, and social needs of the school as a whole. The Visiting Team's understanding is that focus groups will continue.

The staff is encouraged to monitor student achievement and to modify instruction to meet the needs of the students. Staff members are encouraged to collaborate in this effort, enlisting the counselors, social workers, and other teachers while attending to the data.

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

To a moderate extent, the leadership uses various assessment tools to monitor students. SAT testing, end-of-year CRT testing, and teacher-made tests, quizzes, projects, writing assignments, and observations are used to evaluate student progress. The Language Arts Department is using the AGS to identify reading levels to assist language arts teachers in teaching appropriately to all students. Math teachers use pre and post testing to measure progress. Teachers admitted the need to use additional assessments to identify areas of strength and weakness, reflect on their practice, and then modify their instructional strategies to more clearly meet the needs of their students.

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?*

The Visiting Team found that, to a great extent, the leadership provides effective organizational and efficient operational management. All focus groups, as well as the student group, commented on the valiant efforts the leadership has made to create a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment. While there are concerns regarding the physical facility (climate and temperature control issues), everyone felt that the school was safe, that the rooms were well equipped, and that teachers were given resources needed for effective instruction. In fact, the staff and students were extremely complimentary of the administration. When students were asked, they loudly declared that they "loved" the school, the administration, and the teachers, and they also declared what a fine school Indian Hills Middle School is.

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

In support of the teachers' efforts to improve the instructional climate of the school, the leadership makes available monies to support these programs. If money is not available, the effort is made to go outside of the regular budgets and look for alternative funding. Teachers are encouraged to look for grants and alternative funding when special needs arise.

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

To a large extent, the leadership at Indian Hills Middle School empowers the school community with the shared responsibility for student learning. The leadership of the school shows by example the benefits of being a member of a collaborative team. The leadership works alongside the teachers, the custodians, the secretaries, and the lunch workers in modeling the benefits of shared responsibility. All staff members are encouraged to take an active role in the school community in terms of participation and/or input regarding school community issues.

Students are also encouraged to play an active role in the school community (e.g., assisting the cluster special education units as peer mentors, serving on the peer leadership team or student council). Since the school community reflects the beliefs and vision of all stakeholders, the commitment to serve the school community naturally follows.

Community Building:

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

The Visiting Team saw evidence of community fostered by Indian Hills Middle School's students, staff, administration, and parents. Each of these groups commented on the impact of cultivating positive relationships in creating a sense of safety, well-being, and trust. The school's motto is "CARE," which stands for "Charitable, Accountable, Respectful Education." The Visiting Team found that the school lives up to its motto—not only within the school, but also in the local community.

The Visiting Team encourages Indian Hills Middle School to include classified employees (secretaries, custodians, cooks, and aides) within its team and to make them a part of the accreditation process in order to have complete buy-in with all the stakeholders of the school.

The school is dedicated to creating and supporting a learning environment for students that nurtures a sense of caring and belonging. The Visiting Team found strong evidence of support for the administration among teachers, students, and community members.

The Visiting Team found there is a collaborative effort at the school, but found there could be better emphasis in this area. There needs to be time set apart for department teams, cross-department teams, and vertical teaming with the elementary and high schools.

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

The school actively engages parents and families as partners in the learning process through a variety of programs, resources, and instructional materials. Parents can access grades and assignments, as well as communicate with teachers, through a program called Power School. Furthermore, the school is in the process of providing each teacher with his or her own web page as another resource for parents and the community. To date, 23 teachers have created their web pages. The staff was also given professional development opportunities in which UEN trained the staff on the creation of web pages.

The school is in the process of utilizing better collaborative ideas among teachers, departments, and the administration. The administration uses newsletters, parent-teacher conferences, and web pages to collaborate with parents.

Through the community, many awards are given to the students. There is the "Above 'C' Level Award" and the "Warrior Target Award" (among others). Both of these awards are given to students through a collaborative effort of administrators, teachers, and community members.

Parents expressed to the Visiting Team that this school does a better job of communicating with students and parents than any other school they have to deal with.

While there are fantastic efforts made to communicate to all the stakeholders in the school, the Visiting Team recommends that the school make a concerted effort to increase cross-departmental collaboration, as well as include the classified staff in the change process.

Culture of Continuous Improvement and Learning:

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?*

Professional development is an important part of Indian Hills Middle School. Almost all of the teachers interviewed expressed the desire to be better teachers and said that they are always working toward greater knowledge and more information regarding good teaching practices and strategies. The Visiting Team was told of in-services regarding website making and learning styles, as well as a whole-school in-service before the beginning of the school year to help prepare teachers for the modified block schedule that was put in place this year.

Jordan School District also offers professional development opportunities, which many of the teachers at Indian Hills Middle School take advantage of.

While professional development is part of Indian Hills Middle School, professional development opportunities that are directly linked to teachers' specific needs should be provided. The Visiting Team recommends that the administration of Indian Hills Middle School survey the teachers and ask what types of in-service are needed within their departments, classrooms, and school. Continuing in-service is needed regarding how to teach in a block schedule within a specific content area, perhaps inviting teachers from another middle-level school that has been on the block schedule for several years to come so that teachers of Indian Hills Middle School can get ideas and help with the challenges of teaching on the block schedule.

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

Indian Hills Middle School does an outstanding job of creating conditions that support change. The school diligently works to make productive change a reality, and is not afraid to do things differently to meet the needs of the stakeholders of the school. Because of this attitude toward ongoing change and continued improvement, Indian Hills Middle School, in its Accreditation Self-Study, often scored itself lower (using rubric standards) than where it truly is to ensure that the school will continue to work toward productive change. The administration is open to ideas and suggestions from all stakeholders. When parents had issues with the organization of parent-teacher conferences the administration listened to these concerns and made every effort to fix the problem. The Visiting Team commends Indian Hills Middle School's efforts to implement continuous change and encourages the school to continue its improvement.

CHAPTER 4: NORTHWEST ASSOCIATION OF ACCREDITED SCHOOLS (NAAS) STANDARDS I-XI

Most of our public junior/middle schools are not accredited through NAAS. They are accredited by the USOE – it is their choice to join NAAS or not.

CHAPTER 5: SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT EFFORTS – ACTION PLAN

a)   *To what extent is the schoolwide action plan adequate in addressing the critical areas for follow-up?*

Indian Hill Middle School has adequately aligned its action plans to the critical areas of need in the school. It is the Visiting Team's belief that the action plan will help improve scores in both the math and language arts areas if "best practices" for teaching are continually implemented in these areas and the focus is on the Core Curriculum. As action plans are updated in the future, it is recommended that disaggregated data and results from the student, parent, and faculty surveys be incorporated into the plan.

b)   *To what extent is there sufficient commitment to the action plan, schoolwide and systemwide?*

Indian Hill Middle School is committed to the action plan and to a schoolwide system of continuous improvement with the administration being the driving force. It seems the faculty is committed to the action plan and becoming more active in accomplishing these goals. Teacher empowerment will ensure long-term commitment and successful incorporation of the action plan regardless of the tenure of the principal(s).

c)   *How sound does the follow-up process that the school intends to use for monitoring the accomplishments of the schoolwide action plan appear to be?*

The action plan does not address the need for monitoring and/or evaluating the effectiveness of the Comprehensive School Improvement Plan. In order to monitor school improvement efforts and evaluate their effectiveness, the leadership needs to identify standards and benchmarks such that the staff will realize when goals have been met so they can celebrate their successes.

CHAPTER 6: MAJOR COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
OF THE VISITING TEAM

Commendations:

- The school community is to be commended for its extensive list of innovative practices and programs which have been implemented at Indian Hills Middle

School, including the modified block and trimester schedule, the PE summer school credit classes, the peer mentor class, the "My Favorite Teacher Card" teacher recognition program, the "One Random Act of Coolness" student card program, and the Red Care Cards.

- The Indian Hills Middle School community is to be commended on the considerable effort that has been put into the development of rubrics for assessment of the DRSLs and teacher effectiveness.

- The school community is to be commended for its ownership of the process.

- The school community is to be commended for its broad-based understanding of the accreditation process, including new teachers and students.

- The school community is to be commended for the improvements that were made in the area of discipline management, as reflected in the dramatic drop in disruptive conduct referrals.

- The administration is to be commended on their support of the staff and their willingness to share the leadership of the school with the stakeholders.

- The school is commended for its ability to include and have students show ownership of the school community by their respect for the school, the students, and the facility. Their respect for the school was stated loud and clear when they overwhelmingly agreed that "they love their school; they have caring teachers who truly care about them and who truly want to help them."

- The school community is to be commended for their alignment of the DRSLs with the district goals, the school community's values, and the Utah Life Skills.

Recommendations:

- The Visiting Team recommends that the school community incorporate the school climate survey results into the action plan, to analyze and use the survey as a basis for improvement in the school.

- The Visiting Team recommends that the school action plan be revisited and that benchmarks be made for the assessments in the school's action plan so that progress can be measured and successes celebrated.

- The Visiting Team recommends that the school and/or district provide time within the contract day that will allow for collaboration within and between

departments and provide the time for ongoing professional development, which supports the goals of the school.

- The Visiting Team recommends that the leadership of the school continue to elicit feedback on the professional development needs of the staff and provide for these needs, to include content-specific professional development.

- The Visiting Team recommends that the leadership/district address the facility in terms of the need for air conditioning and ventilation.

- The Visiting Team recommends that the school community identify the students who are not learning, determine why they are not learning, and write a student achievement plan to address these students' needs.

- The Visiting Team recommends that practices inside the classroom reflect changes in the schedule—and instructional practices should also reflect these changes (i.e., the 72-minute period). It is recommended that classroom teaching align with developmentally appropriate best practices to ensure learning for all students.

- The Visiting Team recommends that the school create a central location to post major projects, tests, and in-school activities for students and teachers to avoid or minimize student work overload.