

**The Report of the  
Accreditation Visiting Team**

**Layton High School  
440 Lancer Lane  
Layton, Utah 84041**

**March 31-April 1, 2009**



**Utah State Office of Education  
250 East 500 South  
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Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-4200**

**THE REPORT OF THE  
VISITING TEAM REVIEWING**

**Layton High School  
440 Lancer Lane  
Layton, Utah 84041**

**March 31-April1, 2009**

**UTAH STATE OFFICE OF EDUCATION**

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State Superintendent of Public Instruction**

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## **FOREWORD**

The major purpose of the accreditation process is to stimulate school growth and improvement so as to increase student achievement.

In these efforts, the school staff makes a comprehensive evaluation of the school's programs, operations, and results. The school determines how actual practices align to stated objectives and resulting outcomes. It is a three-phased evaluation: (1) self-evaluation, (2) on-site evaluation by an external team of educators, and (3) implementation using units of the evaluation to improve the school by effecting thoughtful change.

The evaluation, March 31-April 1, 2009, was conducted because of the school's desire to ensure quality education for all students in the school, and to increase student achievement.

The entire staff of Layton 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 Paul C. Smith is also commended.

The staff and administration are congratulated for their desire for excellence at Layton High School, and also for the professional attitude of all members of the group, which made it possible for them to see areas of weakness and strength and to suggest procedures for bringing about improvements.

While these recommendations may be used to solicit financial support to acquire some of the materials, equipment, and services needed to carry out a more effective program, it is even more important that the faculty and administration utilize them as they continue to evaluate and modify course offerings and administrative and classroom procedures to more dramatically increase student achievement at Layton High School.

Patti Harrington, Ed.D.  
State Superintendent  
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12/30/2008

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Neil Hancey ..... CTE Supervisor  
Nancy Farhenbach ..... CTE Supervisor  
Mike Parker..... CTE Supervisor  
Holly Handy..... CTE Supervisor

# LAYTON HIGH SCHOOL

## ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF

### School Administration

Paul C. Smith ..... Principal  
Dr. Muriel Mann ..... Assistant Principal  
Mark Pendleton ..... Assistant Principal  
Jonathan Gochberg ..... Assistant Principal

### Counseling

Nancy Wood ..... Counselor  
Allyne Hall ..... Counselor  
Teena Carper ..... Counselor  
B.J. Lovell ..... Counselor  
Marilyn Greer ..... Counselor  
Bonnie Novak ..... CTE Coordinator

### Support Staff

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Leslie Barker	Tracie Hendrickson	Kelly Staubus
Betty Bauerle	Theresa Henehan	Cynthia Thackeray
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Bernice Conrad	Layne Hill	Alex Trujillo
Delphina Desantis	Jacoby Marston	Rachel Wadsworth-
Ryan Dowdle	Patricia Maurer	Smith
Lora Egan	Julie Nuzman	Christopher Waite
Cindy Fisher	Wendy Orme	Lynette Webb
Todd Fortin	Howard Pate	Shirlyn Weston
Mitchell Frandsen	Tami Poe	Devin Williams
Emily Garza	Cathy Reese	Cindy Wilson
Tori Green	Leta Sharp	Holli Woods
Judy Hales	Scott Soelberg	
Heidi Harris	Rod Southam	

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Craig Bjorkland  
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Bradly Chapple  
Merrell Child  
Delose Conner  
Marc Curtis  
Sallee Drake  
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Becky Erickson  
Joe Everton  
Tim Feltner  
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Kasha Granger  
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Michael Hansen  
Mark Harris  
Brad Hawkins  
Susan Heath  
Roger Heslop  
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David Hopkins  
Carole Hyde  
Kim Jensen  
Lisa Jeppson  
Stephanie Johnson  
Karen Jones  
Chris Judd  
Jeff Kidder  
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Kristy Knight  
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Kay Merrell  
Kelby Miller  
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Barbara Munns  
Shirley Noble  
Renata Orbinski  
Rochelle Plott  
Van Price  
Preston Richey  
Eric Scholer  
Claudia Seiter  
Justin Selman  
Keith Sorensen  
Robert Spencer  
Kathy Stoker  
Angela Taylor  
Nancy Treasure  
Elaine Vaughn  
Ricci Vowles  
LeRoy Webb  
Jaralee Wettstein  
JoAnn Wiseman  
Lark Woodbury

## LAYTON HIGH SCHOOL

### MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Layton High School is to provide a safe and respectful environment where students are given the opportunity to excel academically and develop into responsible citizens.

### BELIEF STATEMENTS

At Layton High School, we believe:

- Student learning is the chief priority for the school.
- A safe and respectful environment promotes student learning.
- Students need to be involved in solving problems and producing quality work.

### DESIRED RESULTS FOR STUDENT LEARNING (DRSLs)

1. **Effective Communicator:** Students will demonstrate improvement in reading, writing, computation, and technical skills.
2. **Critical Thinker:** Students will acquire, organize, and evaluate information to make informed decisions.
3. **Responsible Citizen:** Students will assume responsibility for personal actions and act ethically.

Date of visit: March 31-April 1, 2009

## **MEMBERS OF THE VISITING TEAM**

Dr. Roy Hoyt, Hurricane Middle School, Washington School District, Visiting  
Team Chairperson

Deborah Deem, Ogden Preparatory Academy, Charter School

Wendi Graham, Ogden Preparatory Academy, Charter School

Sally Lewis, Bonneville High School, Ogden School District

Kristin Packer, Lehi High School, Alpine School District

## **VISITING TEAM REPORT**

### **LAYTON HIGH SCHOOL**

#### **CHAPTER 1: SCHOOL PROFILE**

Layton High began serving students in 1966. The school serves students in the Layton, Kaysville, Clearfield, Syracuse areas. As these cities have grown, so has the diversity of the school. Layton High School currently is 84.9 percent Caucasian, which is a six percent decrease from six years ago. Most notable is the Hispanic population, which has increased from four to eight percent.

The student population has remained stable, which is exemplified in the housing breakdown in the community. The school community consists of 74 percent single-family housing, 17 percent multiple-family housing and seven percent mobile homes. The stability and consistency of the student body is reflected in these percentages. The school has approximately a 22 percent mobility rate with most of the transfers, withdrawals, and new student enrollments coming from students who live in apartments and mobile homes.

The school is divergent in its social structure, ranging from high socioeconomic status to those that are at, or near, the poverty level. Seventeen percent of the school's students are on free or reduced-price lunch. The unemployment rate for Davis County is approximately five percent, with the same percentage applicable to the Layton High School community.

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

Layton High School has an experienced staff. The average number of years experience for teachers is over 15 years. The four administrators have 106 years of combined administrative experience. The principal, Mr. Paul Smith, has been principal of the school for 34 years. Forty-five percent of certified staff has a graduate degree.

Student enrollment decreased from 2003 to 2008, but the current year indicates a two percent increase over the previous year. Projections for the next three years indicate a slight increase. Mobility rate shows that in the 2007-2008 school year 294 students checked out and 141 students checked into school. Released time enrollment has decreased over the past five years from 61 to 57 percent.

Totals for economically disadvantaged students have increased sixfold over the past three years. Programs designed to assist students who are economically disadvantaged include AVID, UBSCT, remediation, Read 180, study skills classes, lunchtime tutoring, and after-school tutoring. Average daily attendance is 95.82 percent.

Concurrent enrollment classes are taught at Layton High School. Several teachers have become qualified as adjunct faculty at the high school and make college credit accessible to students outside the traditional university campus. During the 2007-2008 school year, 681 students took advantage of the concurrent program.

Criterion-referenced testing has been utilized to reveal who is and is not learning. The school is assisted by a data specialist who disaggregates data to reveal performing and non-performing groups. The school has responded to this data by creating programs to assist students who are struggling. The focus will be on the DRSL “effect communicator” in an effort to increase the number of students who are proficient on the CRTs. The school has provided remediation for students who are repeating the UBSCT.

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

Since the previous Visiting Team visit, it is evident the school has made progress in using data to identify subgroups who need assistance. The profile contained pertinent information; however, it excluded in-depth information. Additional data was made available to the Visiting Team upon their arrival at the school.

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

The school’s self-study accurately reflects the school’s current strengths on performance tests, attendance, enrollment, survey of educational quality, and ethnicity. Some of the data was presented with inadequate analysis. Future work on this school self-analysis should be deeper in reflection in identifying who is and who is not learning.

#### **Suggested Areas for Further Inquiry:**

- Further disaggregation of the CRT scores would help benchmark performance and guide continued implementation of learning strategies and specific learning targets on which students are underperforming.
- Collect data on participation in and effectiveness of existing interventions available to student.

## **CHAPTER 2: NORTHWEST ASSOCIATION OF ACCREDITED SCHOOLS (NAAS) 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?*

Layton High School's mission and belief statements have basically remained unchanged since the school's first accreditation experience in 2003. Along with the mission statement, the school community also follows the Layton Lancer Creed, which has been used since the school has opened in 1966. Because of the stability of the mission and belief statements, programs and facilitation have been established to institutionalize the vision of Layton High School.

Layton High School's DRSLs have been modified since the last accreditation visit. It was determined by stakeholders that changes were necessary. Using the data from the DRSL indicators, it was agreed that student learning needed to be the basis of the educational agenda.

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

Layton High School's DRSLs align with the mission and vision statements that have been established. It appears that stakeholders have been involved in the process, and there is a feeling of ownership in the direction of the school.

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

Some of the indicators in the critical thinking and responsible citizen DRSLs could be further developed using SMART goals. The effective communicator DRSL has clearly defined and observable indicators. Particular data collection is mentioned as part of the rubric for all three areas.

- 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?*

Currently, Layton High School is using and has developed policies and programs to guide the institutionalization of the DRSLs. For example, remediation courses and the AVID program, Legion program, advisory, late-start collaboration, and Ambassadors have been created to address to focus on the three DRSLs.

### **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?*

Layton High School adheres to the standards outlined by the USOE. Teachers at Layton High School are identifying essential knowledge and skills and giving them priority. Teachers are working together within their departments to clarify standards of instruction, assessment and grading. Teachers are meeting monthly and weekly to continue collaboration.

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

The Visiting Team commends Layton High School for focusing on supporting and challenging students with a diverse offering of courses, such as applied mathematics, study hall, applied language arts, Advanced Placement and concurrent enrollment classes, as well as the AVID program.

- c) *To what extent does the teaching staff work collaboratively to support the development of a curriculum that focuses on the school's DRSLs?*

Layton High School's teachers are provided with professional development annually and monthly. Emphasis has been placed on effective communication. Note-taking practices have been taught and implemented in the classrooms. Many teachers are implementing classroom activities to attempt to reduce tardies, thus encouraging responsible citizenry; however, there is limited evidence that this is a collaborative effort. The advisory period is being used to help students learn and understand what it means to be a responsible citizen. Students have been able to cite specific classes and activities that are teaching them to be critical thinkers and how that is helping them prepare for post-high school activities.

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

Layton High School is making some great strides in collecting and evaluating data to help develop a curriculum to meet the needs of the students. Many departments are making great efforts to align curricula vertically and horizontally to ensure a quality education for their students. For example, the Math Department is working to make sure every Algebra 2 student receives the same quality instruction and assessment, in addition to being prepared for the next level. The English Department is working to align assessments in vocabulary and writing. Cross-curricular support is commendable—for instance, the incorporation of graphs and their interpretation into the social studies curriculum to help raise scores in the sciences.

**Instruction:**

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

At Layton High School, the Visiting Team observed a variety of instructional strategies being implemented in the classrooms. PowerPoint presentations, student-led discussions, and direction instruction were commonly viewed by the Visiting Team. Various classes were also observed utilizing resources such as the library and computer labs. Instructors provided feedback and positive reinforcement when responding to students. The Visiting Team encourages Layton High School to continue effective teaching strategies that allow students the opportunity for continued and varied academic growth.

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

The Visiting Team observed the framed and posted DRSLs in every classroom. The instructors stated that the DRSLs are taught through varied curricula in the classroom. Several teachers reported enforcing the application of responsibility by setting high expectations and goals for their students. The students and faculty reported that the school's DRSLs are also taught by student ambassadors and faculty during the advisory period. The lesson plans for advisory are developed and discussed during late-start days. Obvious placement, frequent discussion, and continued practice of the DRSLs have enabled students to know and understand what is expected of them. The Visiting Team encourages this approach for continued understanding and implementation of future DRSLs.

- 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?*

Faculty members at Layton High stated that professional development programs are made available through the school district as well as during late-start Fridays. The school has sent and will continue to send staff members to outside locations in order to gain professional knowledge and insight. Faculty members reported that outside academic or program experts are also brought in for large group presentations. The Visiting Team learned from faculty members that the principals are very willing to provide for substitutes in order for faculty to meet for professional development expectations. The Visiting Team recommends that Layton High School continue to offer professional development opportunities and encouragement as the faculty's needs are guided by changing needs of students and teachers. As the demographics continue to change and as growing numbers of

students meet the requirements for AVID, it is recommended that professional development be made available in those areas.

- 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 has observed that lessons and programs are being developed to accommodate the varying needs of students. An example of this would be the Cornell Notes program, which helps students learn to be better note-takers. Teachers report being reflective of their own practices and how they affect student achievement. They also report their willingness to change instructional strategies if students do not understand the material being taught. The Math and English Departments are working to develop a common language for delivering and assessing information. Teachers are working to enhance the curriculum at Layton High School.

- 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 learned that multiple technology courses are provided through the district and that teachers are working to stay current with instructional technology. Up-to-date technology is readily available to faculty members and students at Layton High School.

**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?*

Layton High School exhibits classroom and departmental collaborative assessments. There are indications that more rubrics and assessments need to be developed and administered throughout the school.

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

Layton High utilizes test scores from ACT, UBSCT, and end-of-level CRTs, in addition to formative and summative assessments, to determine academic expectations. The implementation and continued use of rubrics helps maintain a fair means of assessment across the board.

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

The data specialist at Layton High is available for in-service meetings and training to critically evaluate and help determine the direction of the school's programs. In an effort to foster school-wide student success, the school administration reports using available data to improve and develop programs.

- 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?*

Layton High uses the late start on the final Friday of each month to discuss student assessment strategies. Departmental meetings are held once a month during the planned extended lunch period. Common subjects within a department meet weekly to discuss common assessment practices. Professional development days are utilized at the beginning of the school year for teachers to collaborate on departmental teaching and 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 faculty at Layton High has a common rubric to assess the school-wide DRSLs. Each DRSL has several indicators that can be assessed. SMART goals have been used to determine the criteria for the rubric for each of the DRSLs.

### **CHAPTER 3: NAAS SUPPORT STANDARDS**

#### **Leadership and Organization:**

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

The school leadership at Layton High School has established an academic learning climate in which teaching and learning are supported. The leadership of the school has an expectation for the staff to work collaboratively to ensure the success of all students. This model of collaboration is more evident now than when the school was observed during the previous team visit. Most teachers in the school recognize the value of collaboration and its positive impact on student learning.

- 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 school leadership is committed to making decisions that are based on available student achievement data, research-based, and collaborative. Some departments/teachers in the school have made progress in the development of formative tests for more immediate information of student performance. The departmental leadership is encouraged to continue to develop these formative tests for the purpose of making earlier diagnoses of who is learning and who is not.

- 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?*

School-wide policies and operational procedures are consistent with the school's beliefs and mission, and are designed to maximize opportunities for successful learning. The leadership is trusted by the stakeholder groups to make decisions regarding the allocation of resources in order to create an effective learning environment.

- 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?*

Layton High School is reaching out to involve most parents and families as partners in the collaborative process. Sophomore Night is one example of the school's reaching out to connect students and parents with the school. The school is encouraged to do more to identify and reach out to the parents and families of minority students.

- 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 school has made concerted efforts to implement programs that ensure the success of all students. The staff has established an advisory program that provides an opportunity for students to connect with an adult who will provide them with academic support for three years. This program has great potential, but still needs buy-in by all staff members as well as some other fine-tuning to assure its success.

### **School Services:**

This standard is dealt with in the school's NAAS annual report, which requires specific responses and information regarding student support services, guidance services, health services, library information services, special education services, and family and community services.

### **Facilities and Finances:**

This standard is addressed in the school's annual report to NAAS, which requires specific responses regarding the physical plant, finances, audit of school records, advertising, etc.

## **CHAPTER 4: NAAS SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT STANDARD**

### **Culture of 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?*

Starting in the spring of 2008, Layton High School initiated a school-wide evaluation of where the school stands in the accreditation process. All stakeholders were involved in the completion of a survey to evaluate their current accreditation progress. Involvement was ongoing through timely departmental analysis and focus group participation. Departments met to align their curricula, not only with State Core Curriculum requirements and common assessments, but with the school's desired results for learning as well.

- 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?*

Layton High School encourages professional development through support of small learning communities, late start Fridays and district in-service sessions.

Cornell Notes, a product of AVID, has been adopted and utilized by teachers throughout the school. The direction of the school's goals is evident to the staff and students, but perhaps not as apparent to parents and community stakeholders.

- 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?*

Layton High School is committed to continuous improvement in its action plan. Critical follow-up areas would include future evaluation of existing programs as to their effectiveness and availability to **all** students.

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

Layton High's leadership team is committed to accreditation as an ongoing process, as is evident from the school's action plan. Though the current plan addresses each of the desired results for student learning with adequate timelines, specifics as to how these are to be measured should be more fully developed. It is noted that several of these programs are newly established, and first-year baseline data can be used for future evaluation and refinement.

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

The Visiting Team has seen significant progress in discussing, developing, and improving the original plan. The action plan has been updated and refined as needed. School DRSLs have been simplified and criteria for assessment included. The use of data is recognized by most staff members as an important part of improvement process. It is apparent that the school is committed to continuous improvement.

- 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 made significant progress in addressing the recommendations of the previous Visiting Team. Professional development opportunities are available through district training, monthly school late starts, and weekly departmental meetings, and have been utilized to discuss best teaching practices, individual student success, and the development of student assessments.

## **CHAPTER 5: COMMUNITY BUILDING**

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

Layton High's leadership team is committed to accreditation as an ongoing process, as is evident from the school's action plan. Though the current plan addresses each of their desired results for student learning with adequate timelines, specifics as to how these are to be measured were lacking. It should be noted that several of these programs are newly established, and first-year baseline data can be used for future evaluation and refinement.

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

Layton High School reaches out to parents and families to engage them as partners in the learning process. Parents are involved through the Community Council, PTSA, and the focus groups that addressed the accreditation process specifically. The school should consider doing more to reach out to the families of minority students.

In addition, LHS continually encourages community involvement in all extracurricular activities that the school offers. Parent volunteers are evident in every aspect of school life.

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

All stakeholders were involved in the School Improvement Survey and Prevention Needs Assessment Survey. Parents and students have been involved in the focus group evaluative sessions.

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

The School Improvement Plan has been updated from the last accreditation visit. Though its creation involved the entire school community, there is little evidence as to how the final action plan has been communicated directly to all stakeholders.

## **CHAPTER 6: MAJOR COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE VISITING TEAM**

### **Commendations:**

- The Visiting Team commends Layton High School for providing its staff numerous with opportunities for professional development.
- The Visiting Team commends the school for its strong CTE programs. Many vocational programs are available to help students prepare for jobs in the near future.
- The Visiting Team commends Layton High School for its strong leadership. The administration and department heads care about the success of the students, respond to parent concerns, and are active in supporting staff members.

- The Visiting Team commends Layton High for developing and implementing innovative programs designed for students who need assistance (AVID, student advisory time, lunchtime tutoring).
- The Visiting Team commends Layton High School for making tremendous strides in recognizing the power of student data, and for continuing to develop competence to use it effectively to both assess program effectiveness and identify who is learning and who is not.

**Recommendations:**

- Although at-risk students have been identified, the Visiting Team recommends that specific measures be initiated and institutionalized to ensure continued student success. Layton High has several optional remediation programs in place that many are taking advantage of; however, the school should consider implementing required remediation.
- The Visiting Team recommends that the school focus on identifying targets, standards, and methods of assessment that can be embedded in everyday classroom practices. This will assure learning objectives are explicitly taught and assessed.