

**The Report of the  
Accreditation Visiting Team**

**Mapleton Junior High School  
362 East 1200 North  
Mapleton, Utah 84664**

**April 7-8, 2009**



**Utah State Office of Education  
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Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-4200**

**THE REPORT OF THE  
VISITING TEAM REVIEWING**

**Mapleton Junior High School  
362 East 1200 North  
Mapleton, Utah 84664**

**April 7-8, 2009**

**UTAH STATE OFFICE OF EDUCATION**

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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, April 7-8, 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 Mapleton Junior 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 Suzanne Kimball is also commended.

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

Patti Harrington, Ed.D.  
State Superintendent  
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**MAPLETON JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL**

**ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF**

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Scott Johnson ..... Assistant Principal  
Tim Thompson..... Administrative Assistant

**Counseling**

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Flora Chappell..... Counselor  
Dave Murphy ..... Counselor

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Theresa Carey ..... Financial Secretary  
Kristen Clayton ..... Secretary  
Tiffany Jones..... Attendance Secretary  
Jenny Lengal ..... Secretary Technician  
Catherine Page ..... Computer Technician  
Diane Cooper ..... Nurse  
Roxanne Garcia..... Speech  
Nancy Krieger..... Speech  
Temma Harris ..... Psychologist  
Craig Larsen..... Librarian  
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Karen Blunk ..... Technician  
Lynette Christensen ..... Technician  
Mary Earl ..... Technician  
Jill Grotegut ..... Technician  
Shelley Moreno..... Technician  
Julie Pennington..... Technician  
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Glenda Bringham ..... Lunch Manager  
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Teri VanAusdal.....	Lunch Services
Melissa Wilson.....	Lunch Services
Richard Daybell .....	Head Custodian
Adam Roberts .....	Night Custodian
Olga Aguirre .....	Sweeper
Pauline Edmunds .....	Sweeper
Roger Hutchings .....	Sweeper
Phillip Mecham.....	Sweeper
Hilary Miner.....	Sweeper
Boyce Simons .....	Sweeper
Don Vinson.....	Sweeper

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Robyn Card	Kathy Ludlow	Janeen Strange
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Britney Davis	Porter Nielsen	Kent Wetzell
Brian Frankowski	Ryan Nielsen	Ryan Williams
Bryan Gillies	Travis Palfreyman	Paige Workman
Bonny Groneman	Julie Park	Maughn Wright
Melissa Heaton	Jo Edan Parker	Darrell Wyatt

**VISITING TEAM REPORT**  
**MAPLETON JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL**

**MISSION STATEMENT**

Students are the Focus,  
Success is the Goal.

**BELIEF STATEMENTS**

- Students need a deep understanding of knowledge and skills to problem solve, reason, and produce quality work.
- Each student has unique physical, social, emotional, and intellectual needs.
- Our goal is to prepare students to become contributing members of society.
- A safe, supportive learning environment promotes student achievement.
- Diversity enriches our school through the recognition of a variety of ideas, values, and cultures.
- Effective collaboration and communication with families as partners is essential to the success of our students.
- All students can learn.

**DESIRED RESULTS FOR STUDENT LEARNING (DRSLs)**

1. Respectful Citizens
  - Respectful Citizens participate positively with responsibility and tolerance.
2. Effective Communicators
  - Effective Communicators know how to listen, share ideas, and resolve conflict using various skills and strategies.
3. Reflective Learners
  - Reflective Learners set goals, evaluate progress, and continually pursue knowledge and learning.

Date of visit: April 7-8, 2009

## **MEMBERS OF THE VISITING TEAM**

Doug Finch, Cascade Elementary, Alpine School District, School, Visiting Team  
Co-Chairperson

Mari Braithwaite, Curriculum Director, Alpine School District, Visiting Team  
Co-Chairperson

C. Dolph Church, Murray High School, Murray School District

Gregg Roberts, World Language Specialist, Utah State Office of Education

**VISITING TEAM REPORT**  
**MAPLETON JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL**

**CHAPTER 1: SCHOOL PROFILE**

The faculty at Mapleton Junior High consists of 36 full-time teachers and approximately 195 parent volunteers who donate approximately 2,500 hours of service yearly. The school includes students from the communities of Springville and Mapleton, whose combined population consists of about 35,000 residents. The school serves approximately 960 students in grades seven through nine who come from five elementary schools. The neighborhoods surrounding the school are considered to have middle to upper-middle class economic status, and about 19 percent of Mapleton Junior High students are on free and reduced-price lunch. The ethnic population is 12 percent of student enrollment, predominately consisting of Hispanic, Asian, Pacific Islander, African American, and Native American students. During the school year, the school experiences approximately 18 percent turnover in student population.

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

The majority of students score favorably on state CRT and ITED assessments. However, there is a significant achievement gap between these students and the CRT scores of some subgroups (low SES, ELL, minority population and special education students).

Survey data revealed that a high percentage of students and parents feel safe and supported in their educational pursuits at school. A high percentage of students participate in extracurricular activities. However, disaggregated data shows a difference in perception between the student body as a whole and the minority students regarding the value of their “voice” in school matters.

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

Mapleton Junior High would benefit from further disaggregation of student performance data, including subgroup scores and trends of the DRP, ITED, and DWA. Data regarding student discipline, dropouts, and enrollment trends may also provide additional insights for future school profiles.

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

As a school’s first accreditation self-study, Mapleton Junior High has made a commendable effort to identify the school’s current strengths and limitations.

Consideration of the abovementioned modifications and additional authentic data created through the school's learning community teams would strengthen future self-studies.

**Suggested Areas for Further Inquiry:**

- Track progress of students receiving remediation services (study skills for life, step up, Read 180, Math Lab).
- Include behavior data and trends (suspensions, drop outs, safe school violations, bullying).

**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?*

The school's support team, under the direction of an administrative intern, initially developed the school's mission and belief statements during the 2007-08 school year. The support team then gathered feedback from the remaining portion of the staff, the PTA and School Community Council. Students were also given an opportunity to express ideas and offer input regarding the proposed mission statements. Ultimately the faculty and students voted on a final mission statement. While the support team did the initial identification of beliefs and values, there was clear evidence that the leadership team made efforts to include feedback from all stakeholders in the process.

The Visiting Team commends the administration for placing emphasis on the DRSLs. These have been advertised for at least the past year by a display case in the hallway, as well as other methods throughout the school. Efforts to internalize the DRSLs have been made and attested to by students and staff members. Students were aware of the DRSLs and many could recite them upon request, while others could not list them but knew them in context.

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

There is clear alignment between the school's mission and belief statements and the DRSLs.

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

The development of clear measures for the DRSLs is in its infancy at Mapleton Junior High. The school has identified general indicators for the DRSLs, but has yet to identify clear corresponding benchmarks for each DRSL. The Visiting Team would recommend that Mapleton Junior High now move forward to collaboratively building a rubric and assessment system for one of the established DRSLs so that it can be fully institutionalized prior to the next full team visit. In addition, the Visiting Team would recommend that the school research the skills included in the DRSL, establish performance criteria and standards, and obtain professional development needed to explicitly teach and assess the DRSL to students.

- 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?*

There is some evidence that the mission and beliefs established by the school guide, and will continue to guide, the procedures, policies, and decisions of the school. The student-led conferences are an excellent example. Given the amount of teacher turnover, the Visiting Team would recommend that the school leadership work together with the PTA and School Community Council to continually revisit and renew stakeholders' connection with the beliefs, mission, and DRSLs. This effort will more deeply ingrain the DRSLs into the daily workings of the school, as well as acculturate new faculty members.

### **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 staff members at Mapleton Junior High are a cohesive group of professionals who perform at high levels. Most of the staff is cognizant of the State Core and Standards. It is apparent that most of the curriculum has been aligned to the core. The Visiting Team commends those of the staff members who understand the necessity of curriculum mapping and the need to align the curriculum with the State Core. The staff may benefit from continuing toward alignment of all curricula, paying special attention to vertical and horizontal articulation.

The school-wide DRSLs align admirably with the Utah Life Skills.

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

The Visiting Team commends the staff for the active teaching observed during the visit. Classroom visits revealed that most students were engaged at a high level in most curricula. Through means of differentiated instruction, efforts were made to engage most students with the curriculum. For instance, the Social Studies Department had students engaged in group discovery, group presentations, and persuasive arguments. Students' behaviors demonstrated the development of higher-order thinking and problem-solving skills. Furthermore, Mapleton Junior High School effectively engages many students through the use of technology in the classroom.

Many staff members noted that minority and lower socioeconomic groups are somewhat less engaged, and also that gifted students are often not fully challenged. The Visiting Team found some evidence that individual teachers monitor and adjust their instruction to address the different ability levels, from gifted to at-risk, within a regular classroom setting. A closer school-wide evaluation concerning differentiated instruction may help the staff and school address this concern. In addition, the Visiting Team invites Mapleton Junior High to add a more "global perspective" to its curriculum through world language offerings for more students.

- 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 encourages Mapleton Junior High School to review its DRSLs and to continue collaboration in order to more explicitly establish connections between the curriculum, the DRSLs, and student learning.

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

Common assessments are beginning to be implemented in most of the departments. Those who have developed these tools find that such assessment identifies individual student strengths and weaknesses. They use their findings to address learning objectives, alter teaching strategies, and adjust mapping. The Visiting Team encourages the other departments to continue working toward developing common assessments to establish a guaranteed and viable curriculum for all students.

## **Instruction:**

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

Mapleton Junior High faculty members use a variety of effective instructional strategies that keep students engaged in their learning. The Visiting Team observed teachers using direct instruction, demonstrations, modeling, group work, hands-on activities, and technology aided instruction, to name a few.

Additionally, time is built into the school day on Wednesday for department and grade-level team collaboration. Teachers indicated that this time is used to share ideas, develop curricula, and work on common subject specific assessments.

- 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?*

As a new school going through the accreditation process for the first time, Mapleton Junior High and its stakeholders only recently completed the work of deciding upon their DRSLs. The focus for the faculty this year has been on helping students get acquainted with the DRSLs. During the advisory period teachers devoted a month to each DRSL, recognizing students who demonstrated traits of reflective learners, effective communicators and respectful citizens. Parent representatives on the School Community Council also noted that the school administration solicited their input during the process and kept them informed during monthly community council meetings.

The faculty is only now beginning to contemplate strategies that might be implemented for explicitly teaching the DRSLs in every classroom. The Visiting Team recognized that this process has only just begun for the faculty, and encourages the faculty to choose one of the DRSLs and devote time during collaboration and professional development to developing strategies that can be effectively used in each curricular area to address the identified DRSL.

- 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?*

Nearly half of the teachers at Mapleton Junior High have three or fewer years of teaching experience. The professional development plan includes a goal to help all new teachers improve their instructional strategies through a mentoring program. New teachers spoke highly of the program and felt fortunate to have been able to start their careers with such an effective mentoring program in place.

Another focus of the professional development plan is to have teachers improve collaboration and begin to develop common formative assessments in curricular areas. Time is set aside once a week in the school schedule in order to give the faculty time to do this work. Some departments have begun to develop common formative assessments and gather relevant data. School stakeholders recognize the value of collaborating, developing of common assessments and analyzing data for the improvement of student learning. The Visiting Team encourages departments to continue to refine their curriculum and teaching strategies through ongoing collaborative work.

- 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 teachers at Mapleton Junior High are endorsed in their content area and appear to be quite proficient in their knowledge of the curriculum. While the majority of the staff members are very young, they show confidence in the classroom and employ a variety of instructional strategies during the lessons. Veteran teachers at the school are very helpful, and the younger teachers speak very highly of the school mentoring program and additional support provided during the weekly department and team meetings. The Visiting Team recommends that the faculty continue to explore instructional strategies that will actively engage all students in learning.

- 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 school's professional development plan includes a goal of identifying and assessing technology needs of the school for more technology integration into the curriculum. The school is well equipped with the latest of technology, and the Visiting Team observed technology being used in some of the classrooms during instruction. While technology is being used in the classroom, there may be a need to more clearly articulate a plan for how the technology could be used to improve instruction.

**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?*

Mapleton Junior High teachers are working collaboratively to develop scope and sequence and align assessments across the departments. Some departments have developed and implemented “walk away” and other forms of benchmark testing

on most units. The Visiting Team also noticed that some classrooms displayed or articulated daily learning objectives.

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

To a great extent, there are school-wide processes to fairly and equitably assess student progress toward meeting individual academic expectations. Student support teams exist to identify and help all students, but especially those who require extra support. Grade-level and departmental teams meet to help address student needs and develop common activities and assessments.

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

The school leadership has used surveys with the school's stakeholders, including students, parents, and teachers. The Criterion-Referenced Tests (CRT) given by the State of Utah in the core subjects were also analyzed. Other standardized tests used included the Degrees of Reading Power (DRP) and the Iowa Test of Educational Development (ITED). The school's leadership further utilized teacher observations of classrooms and student behavior as a data source. The Visiting Team observed that some departments use statewide and district-wide data to drive instruction, and recommends that more specific and disaggregated data be collected and used school-wide.

- 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's professional development program allows teachers opportunities to collaborate on developing a wide variety of assessments. Staff members meet in Professional Learning Communities (PLC) that employ grade-level, departmental, and school-wide "Brutal Facts" teams. These PLC assignments are starting to include the development of common assessment, but the Visiting Team strongly encourages that more time be dedicated to this. Time is scheduled on early release Wednesdays for PLC meetings.

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

This is Mapleton Junior High's first accreditation visit, as the school has only been in existence for three years. Currently there is no school-wide scoring tool to assess the DRSLs in place. The faculty and School Community Council voted on the three current DRSLs during the summer of 2008, and have focused on creating a general awareness and understanding of these school-wide learning

outcomes. The Visiting Team recommends that the school develop performance indicators and a scoring rubric for one DRSL over the next six years.

### 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?*

Mapleton Junior High has fostered the development of an academic learning climate by established a clear, concise, and compelling mission grounded in student learning. By emphasizing the development of shared purpose within the school's first few years, the leadership has set a course for focusing on teaching and 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?*

Numerous examples were found of school leadership employing effective decision making. Data from annual CRT scores is utilized to identify areas for departmental and individual student growth. Teachers participate in professional development and share best practices from teacher in-service. The general attitudes and skills of the teaching staff appear to be becoming more like the enthusiastic and talented new teachers hired each year. Each department also sets SMART goals to monitor the progress of improvement initiatives.

- 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?*

Interviews with the administration and staff provided evidence that the Mapleton Junior High's leadership strongly consider the question, "Will this benefit students?" when making management decisions. Resources are carefully managed with the help of qualified and skilled media and technology, maintenance, and office staff who also positively connect with and understand the school's mission and goals.

- d) *To what extent does the school leadership empower the entire school community and encourage commitment, participation, collaboration, and shared*

*responsibility for student learning through meaningful roles in the decision-making process?*

The school's leadership is working to empower and engage the entire school community. The PTA and School Community Council are viable leadership and service groups that facilitate shared leadership responsibilities with the community. At the school, "Brutal Facts" teams and the support team give feedback and input in the decision-making process. Student council functions will with students identifying and solving problems associated with "student life." It was evident to the Visiting Team that nearly every stakeholder is on a team and feels a sense of participation in meaningful roles at the school.

- 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?*

Mapleton Junior High makes a responsible effort to provide a formal system of interventions to student learning challenges. The school has instituted a daily advisory period where students are encouraged to be reflective learners as they gather portfolio artifacts in preparation for student-led conferences. Grade-level teams meet monthly to discuss specific students who are struggling and develop plans for support. The Visiting Team recommends that the school continue to refine these system-wide responses to student needs, particularly as they create meaningful connections between students and teachers.

#### **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?*

The school's improvement plan is comprehensive and detailed. The administration at Mapleton Junior High recognizes the need to align and consolidate the school's accreditation improvement plan with the School Community Council (LAND Trust) and district-required strategic plans. The Visiting Team recommends that the school annually isolate strategic portions of its outlined plan to focus the utilization of professional development and resources.

- 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?*

Mapleton Junior High teachers reported that professional development focuses on issues and items that they deem appropriate; however stakeholders are not certain that these efforts necessarily related to the school-wide learning outcomes. Teachers are appreciative that the administration provides opportunity to attend conferences and training that are generally content specific. In addition, the mentoring program is a vital part of the professional development for new teachers. The Visiting Team recommends that the school leadership team more closely align the school-wide professional development plan with the school-wide student learning outcomes.

- 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 accreditation action plans generally addresses management issues. The Visiting Team recommends that these action plans be more closely aligned to student learning outcomes (as found in the Community Council's improvement goals). There is substantial commitment to moving forward, and faculty members expressed trust in their leadership team and administration to guide their efforts.

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

The school administration and support teams regularly identify areas for needed change through their "Brutal Facts" teams, and provide time and opportunity for input from the teachers. From these meetings, areas of concern and suggestions for positive change are recommended. Staff members expressed a general feeling that their concerns and suggestions to improve and move forward are welcomed by the administration, as well as the School Community Council. In addition, with the implementation of an early-out collaboration time model, the school team has made a significant commitment to improving the quality of instruction and assessment.

## **CHAPTER 5: COMMUNITY BUILDING**

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

Mapleton Junior High has set a goal of having all students participate in at least one extracurricular activity during the school year. In 2007-2008, 96 percent of students participated in at least one activity. The students recognize the efforts of the faculty in providing a wide array of extracurricular activities and voiced appreciation during the visit for the opportunities afforded them.

All students are assigned an advisory period that meets four times weekly. Advisory teachers help track grades, devote time to reading and homework completion, and allow students to visit other teachers for extra help. One student stated that, "teachers care about their students and keep after them if they start falling behind." It is apparent to students that the teachers notice when they are absent, and want to know why.

Teacher collaboration time is valued by the faculty and fosters community building and working relationships within the school. Teachers new to the profession expressed appreciation for the chance to be able to work with veteran teachers during collaboration time.

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

The school has a web page to promote upcoming events and provide information to the patrons. A teacher directory is provided on the web page, with links to each teacher's e-mail address. Teachers stated that the web page has improved this year and is continually updated. The PTSA sends out quarterly newsletters that help parents stay informed. Additionally, the school uses the SIS grading system that enables parents to track grades and attendance on-line.

Mapleton Junior High is attempting to get students and parents more involved in the educational process, with student-led conferences that are focused on student self-reflection and goal setting. Community members have expressed some mixed feelings regarding these changes from the traditional parent-teacher conference format. The administration is aware of these concerns, and appears to be working to resolve them and adjust the program's implementation to better meet the needs of patrons and the aims of the program.

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

Mapleton Junior High engaged the community in the self-study process by collecting and sharing survey and student performance results with stakeholders. An example was the surveying of the student government, school community council, PTA and faculty to formulate the mission and belief statement. Outside of the administrative team and school support team, limited analysis of school profile data took place during the self-study.

A school support team consisting of department representatives, counselors, and administrators met in the summer of 2008 to analyze testing and survey data. The support team used the data analysis to develop the DRSLs. The DRSLs were then presented to the entire staff and Community Council for review and modification.

The focus groups were organized in the September 2008. Each group was made up of teachers, staff, students and parents, and each met several times to make recommendations for improvement. Departments participated in a departmental analysis. Each department identified areas of strength and suggested areas for improvement. Focus groups and department generally were not part of data analysis from the school profile.

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

The administration meets with the school support team to regularly review and note growth in school improvement and student achievement. The school administration also shares data with recommendations for improvement goals annually with the School Community Council.

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

### **Commendations:**

- As a new school, Mapleton Junior High has established a clear, concise and compelling vision focused on student learning. The Visiting Team commends the school for the concerted effort it has made to identify the mission and belief statements and desired results for student learning. Staff members are striving to employ innovative instructional strategies to engage learning in meaningful learning experiences. The belief statement that “all students can learn” literally drives a never-ending cycle of reflection and improvement for the school employees.
- The Visiting Team commends for its shared leadership. Mapleton Junior High has established a model for shared leadership as it empowers teams with meaningful roles in collaborating for student success. Curricular teams focus on learning targets and common assessments. Grade-level (cross-curricular) teams identify strategies for student interventions. “Brutal Facts” teams identify and work to offer resolutions to learning and school environment issues. Each operates with autonomy of assignment, yet with interdependence, and combines purpose to bring powerful thinking and resources together for the benefit of students.

- The Visiting Team commends the strong sense of family and community that exists among the stakeholders of Mapleton Junior High. Mentoring and acclimating of new staff members is a high priority for school leadership. Students are strongly encouraged to participate in extracurricular programs in order to deepen their connection and engagement into the school culture. Advisory and grade-level team collaboration is designed to ensure that “failure is not an option.” The community utilizes the school campus as an education and activity center year round. Parents play an active role in contributing to school programs and participating in the School Community Council and PTA.

### **Recommendations:**

- The Visiting Team recommends that Mapleton Junior High continue to explore causes and solutions to student achievement gaps identified in the school profile. Continue to work “SMART” in implementing programs and strategies for meeting the social and academic needs of **all** learners at Mapleton Junior High. Furthermore, align the school’s improvement goals and action plans to further facilitate the gathering of school profile data informing the development of goals, action plans and professional development.
- The Visiting Team recommends the further development of the school’s DRSLs. In addition to student intervention issues, cross-curricular teams are poised to develop and implement standards for desired results for student learning. The school may benefit from focusing on one DRSL to identify and develop clearly define indicators, performance criteria, performance standards, instructional strategies, common assessments, etc. Through this effort, Mapleton Junior High will be able to explicitly teach and assess those compelling student outcomes identified during the self-study process.
- The Visiting Team recommends that Mapleton Junior High continue to foster trust and build a strong tradition of community engagement at the school by soliciting and validating input from community members. Particularly when change or innovations are implemented, take the time and budget the effort to raise awareness, train and build new skills and awareness, listen to and help resolve concerns, monitor and adjust—always keeping the focus on the goal of improved student learning. The school improvement initiatives that are sustainable are those that are skillfully integrated into the school culture.