The Report of the
Accreditation Visiting Team

Scott M. Matheson Junior High School

3650 South Montclair Street
Magna, Utah 84044

April 12-13, 2012

Utah State Office of Education
250 East 500 South
P.O. Box 144200
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Scott M. Matheson Junior High School

3650 South Montclair Street
Magna, Utah 84044

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FOREWORD

The purpose of the accreditation process is to stimulate school growth and improvement so as to increase the quality of instruction and student achievement. In these efforts, the school staff makes a comprehensive evaluation of the school's programs, operations, and results. The school determines how actual practices align to stated objectives and resulting outcomes in a three-step evaluation: (1) self-evaluation, (2) on-site evaluation by an external team of educators, and (3) implementation using units of the evaluation to improve the school by effecting thoughtful change.

The evaluation, April 12-13, 2012, was conducted because of the school's desire to ensure quality education for all students in the school, and to increase student achievement.

The entire staff of Scott M. Matheson 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 Marijean Woolf is also commended.

The staff and administration are congratulated for their desire for excellence at Scott M. Matheson Junior High School and for their professional attitude which made it possible for them to see weaknesses and strengths and to suggest procedures for improvements.

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

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*** CMAC Representative Appointment
**** USBA Advisory Representative Appointment
***** Charter School Representative Appointment

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Dr. David L. Gourley ..... Assistant Superintendent, Support Services

SCOTT M. MATHESON JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF

School Administration

Marijean Woolf ..... Principal
Scott Bell ..... Assistant Principal

Counseling

Wally Cowan ..... Counselor
Al Turner ..... Counselor
Nick Young ..... Counselor
Carrie Gregersen ..... Intern Counselor

Support Staff

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Teri Cady
Wendy Christensen
Diane Coles
Marguerita Davilla-Telck
Jeff Day
Pat DeBry
Rhonda DuVall
Sandy Dymock
Jose Gonzalez
Paulette Gordon
Lynette Gorski
Nathan Hall
Curtis Hogue
Jodi Jensen
Luanne Jensen
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Eric Freitas

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Brittany Sylvester
Samantha Taggart
Aimee Ungricht
Van Vuong
Kristi Waterfall
Susan Whitenight
Diane Wilson

SCOTT M. MATHESON JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission at Matheson Junior High school is to provide a safe and rigorous academic learning environment to prepare our students to be responsible citizens who are engaged in college, career, and lifelong learning.

BELIEF STATEMENTS

- We believe students will learn in an affirming, safe environment that reinforces our values of Respect, Responsibility, Caring, Trust, and Family.
- We believe students' learning needs should be the primary focus of all decisions impacting the work of the school.
- We believe students learn best when they are actively engaged in the learning process and teachers use a variety of instructional methods.
- We believe in offering students a variety of enrichment programs in order to prepare them for college and career readiness.
- We believe, as a data-driven professional learning community, in continued improvement of our educational practice.

DESIRED RESULTS FOR STUDENT LEARNING (DRSLs)

1. Academic Excellence
   - Students will demonstrate proficiency in literacy, oral and written expression, and numeracy at or above grade level.
   - Students will use critical thinking skills to problem solve and applying new knowledge.
   - Students will demonstrate proficiency with a variety of digital technologies to access, analyze, synthesize, and apply information.

2. Global Citizenship
   - Students will model the Community of Caring values of Respect, Responsibility, Trust, Caring, and Family.
   - Students will demonstrate personal accountability for their actions and inactions.
   - Students will "T" Take Responsibility, "I" Ignore Negative Behavior, "G" Great Grades and Attendance, "E" Extra Effort Every Day, "R" Respect for Self and Others, and "S" Set Goals.

- Students will demonstrate respect for people with diverse cultures and abilities with awareness of being global citizens.

3. Life Skills
   - Students will demonstrate knowledge of the relationship between life-long learning and employment, emphasizing college readiness and career planning.
   - Student will understand the importance of goal setting, resiliency, and self-advocacy skills.
   - Students will develop a strong work ethic to impact their continuing education and employment.

Date of visit*:* April 12-13, 2012

MEMBERS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Ben Lems, Canyons School District, Visiting Team Co-Chairperson

Rob McDaniel, Murray School District, Visiting Team Co-Chairperson

Annette Harmon, Rocky Mountain Junior High School, Weber School District

Bill Simpson, Elk Ridge Middle School, Jordan School District

Mike Smith, Improve Learning While Doing

VISITING TEAM REPORT

SCOTT M. MATHESON JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

CHAPTER 1: SCHOOL PROFILE

Scott M. Matheson Junior High School is located in Magna in Salt Lake County. The school first opened its doors in 2002 with a student population of 1,075 students. The school's current enrollment is 1,240 students. The minority population of the school has increased in recent years, creating a more diverse student population. The current minority population is 552 students, or 44.5 percent. English language learners make up 16.6 percent of the student body, 12.7 percent are students with disabilities, and 50.3 percent qualify for free or reduced-price lunch.

Matheson Junior High School has a staff that is highly qualified. The staff consists of two administrators; 3.5 counselors, including one intern; and 51 teachers, including seven special education teachers. Of the 51 staff members, 16 have an ESL endorsement, with five teachers working toward endorsement. Many teachers have also earned advanced degrees in their subject area.

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

There were several significant findings revealed in the school profile:

- Matheson Junior High School has seen success in state-wide assessments in recent years, including passing AYP for two consecutive years.
- Matheson Junior High School has continued to see an increase of diversity in its population, including ethnicity, SES, and special education needs.
- Matheson Junior High School has a diverse staff in both ethnicity and experience in education.
- Matheson Junior High School has established a clear emphasis on the collection of data.
- Matheson Junior High School has established an environment where students feel safe and feel that they have a significant adult they can talk to.
- Matheson Junior High School still has limited parental involvement.
- The self-study was overwhelmingly influenced by STATIS and was not as much a continuation of previous accreditation.

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

Matheson Junior High School staff should consider adding analysis to the large amount of data reported. Articulation of how the data is disaggregated, interpreted, and how it drives instruction should all be included in the profile.

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

The self-study does not adequately reflect the strengths of the school or staff. There are great things to celebrate at Matheson Junior High School. For example, the effort to read 10,000 books, the advisory program, the implementation of START, etc. The self-study also does not reflect the feeling of all stakeholders concerning the safe and welcoming culture of the school. In terms of limitations, there is a clear need, which is not articulated, to address the lack of parental involvement.

Suggested Areas for Further Inquiry:

- The Visiting Team recommends that the school continue to collect and analyze data and disaggregate the data, not only by ethnicity, but also by gender, grade level, free- and reduced-price lunch eligibility, at-risk and/or disability status, attendance, discipline referrals, etc. to identify who is learning and who is not. The Visiting Team further recommends that this analysis of data be done both vertically and horizontally.

- The Visiting Team recommends that the school continue to look for creative ways to use technology, both in the classroom and as a means to communicate with students and parents. The Visiting Team further recommends that sufficient time be allocated for professional development to help teachers gain confidence in their ability to use the technology. Furthermore, data should be collected on the use of technology to determine its impact on student achievement.

CHAPTER 2: NORTHWEST ACCREDITATION COMMISSION (NORTHWEST) TEACHING AND LEARNING STANDARDS

Mission, Beliefs and Desired Results for Student Learning (DRSLs):

a) To what degree were the school's mission statement, beliefs, and DRSLs developed and/or revised collaboratively by the school community to define a compelling purpose and vision for the school and to support student achievement?

Changes in the school climate since the last accreditation visit compelled the school to revisit and revise its mission and belief statements and desired results for student learning (DRSLs). This task of evaluating and revising the school's mission statement, beliefs and DRSLs was primarily undertaken by the educational agenda focus group. The revised statements were shared with the rest of staff members for their input before they were finalized. Parents and students were informed of the new mission and belief statements and the DRSLs through announcements, posters, and newsletter articles.

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

The mission and belief statements are in perfect alignment with the school's DRSLs. The Visiting Team commends the school for its efforts to revise their mission, beliefs, and DRSLs to better reflect the climate and goals of the school.

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

The DRSLs have recently been revised to better reflect the goals of the school. A rubric has been created to assess each DRSL. The rubric for Academic Excellence includes indicators such as SRI, AIMS, Acuity, persuasive oratory, My Access, Six Traits of Writing, and Aleks. The rubric for Life Skills includes indicators such as making connections, goal setting, self-advocacy, attendance, work completion, and grades. Indicators for the Global Citizenship DRSL are less objective and are still in the process of being developed and refined.

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?*

The Visiting Team found that the mission, beliefs and DRSLs are closely aligned, and that they guide the school's policies, procedures and decision-making process. Based on discussions with administrators, teachers, students, and parents, current and future policy decisions are based on the ideals set forth in the school's mission statement, beliefs and DRSLs. Most stakeholders are aware of the mission and DRSLs and are in agreement that these form the core of the positive environment at the school.

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?

Collaborative meetings are conducted each Friday after school for staff development, curriculum development and support. Departments use State Core standards and benchmarks to make curriculum decisions. Matheson Junior High School is to be commended for its use of "MVP" words for school-wide language development. Students, parents and staff report that curriculum is linked to the DRSL of Life Skills. Students, parents and teachers report that students are well prepared for future endeavors due to well-planned curriculum and instruction. The faculty has been trained in the Common Core. Many departments are working on developing common assessments and are in the process of using assessment to drive curriculum and instructional decisions.

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 high levels through

differentiated instruction. Student behaviors within the classroom demonstrated that they were engaged in the lesson and were active participants in the learning process. Student interviews illustrated that students feel they are being challenged in their classes, but can also receive remediation through the after-school ALL program or by working one on one with teachers.

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 commends the faculty and administration at Matheson Junior High for being willing to work with each other in implementing school-wide initiatives that support and address the DRSLs. The Visiting Team found evidence that the teachers at Matheson Junior High School have worked vigilantly to create a culture of caring in their classrooms. Students are aware of academic and behavioral expectations throughout the school. The Visiting Team recognizes that the students are high achieving, well-behaved, respectful individuals.

Friday professional development days have been dedicated to teacher instruction in the three DRSLs. Teachers are involved in grade level teaming and department meetings, and some departments are engaged in cross-curricular instruction. The whole school has become involved in the Cultural Fair, which reflects the implementation of indicators in the Global Citizenship DRSL.

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

The Visiting Team found evidence that most departments are using assessments to determine the learning level of students. The Science, English and Math Departments are using Acuity and CRT scores to discover struggling students. My Access is being used across curricula to improve student writing. Departments have used various assessment modes to varying degrees to inform teachers of learning progress, such as end-of-level testing scores, clickers, and formative assessments. The Visiting Team encourages the continuation of the process of assessment, analysis of data, and re-teaching as necessary to improve student learning.

Instruction:

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

The Visiting Team saw evidence of the use of a variety of instructional strategies, as well as a desire and plan to increase the extent of use of strategies. While the current extent of strategies used varies by both individual and departments, there is clear evidence of the strategic use of technology, Big 8 instructional strategies, and note taking. In addition, the staff uses strategies of inclusion and is in the process of understanding and incorporating sheltered instructional strategies (SIOP) school-wide.

The Visiting Team acknowledges a school-wide awareness of the need to use a variety of instructional strategies, and recommends that the staff continue to focus on strategies that support all learners, specifically through differentiation and using the wealth of data the school already collects to further drive instruction.

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 school and staff have developed strategies that enable the explicit teaching of the DRSLs in every classroom. Through Friday meetings and professional development, the staff is clear on the three areas of focus. Staff members appear to be prepared to teach the identified DRSLs, and they frequently do so, but less explicitly. Because of this, the Visiting Team found some disconnect between student understanding regarding those DRSLs. The Visiting Team does find that when questioned, for the most part, students are aware of DRSL content.

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

The school's professional development program is guided by identified needs, specifically those identified by a recent district analysis. Current professional development is focused on the identification of instructional needs, as well as district and state expectations (Common Core, Canvas). The Visiting Team commends the staff on expanding professional development to focus on quality instruction in the school's plan. Specifically, the implementation of SIOP strategies and differentiation should improve student learning.

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?*

Teachers are clearly proficient in their content areas. The Visiting Team also found the staff to be reflective about practice, honest about instructional improvement needs, and willing to implement research-based strategies. We acknowledge the level of expertise of the staff, and recommend that the staff continue to reflect and implement instructional strategies that help all learners succeed.

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

Matheson Junior High School has a well-defined plan for the integration of technology, tempered only by the fiscal funds available. The Visiting Team found evidence of clear purpose and use throughout departments, and observed instruction involving technology throughout the school. Teachers are clearly comfortable with projectors, microphone systems, document cameras, and computers. Many utilize clickers to guide instruction and assessments. In addition, several assessments, including MyAccess, AimsMaze, etc. demonstrate the integration of technology in

assessment. The Visiting Team recommends that the staff focus future efforts on using the vast amount of data the school already collects to assist in improving 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?*

The Visiting Team determined that the school primarily uses district or state assessments, such as CRTs, DWAs, and a battery of reading tests, for school-wide assessments. Many teachers employ rubrics for assignments to make students aware of the high standards for work on these assignments. One of the action steps to facilitate student learning is to develop uniform departmental assessments. The Visiting Team encourages the staff to develop school-wide assessments for student achievement.

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

Several departments at Matheson Junior High School utilize pre-tests to determine student needs in developing their curricula and post-tests to evaluate the effectiveness. Tools used for these assessments include Acuity and My Access. The Visiting Team observed content objectives written on the board in most classrooms. Many students are also aware of the school's DRSLs and how they correlate to the objectives, specifically as they relate to Life Skills. The Visiting Team recommends that the DRSLs be integrated more directly into curriculum maps in order for a more complete assessment of student achievement in these three critical areas.

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

It was noted by the Visiting Team that Matheson Junior High School has many data sources, but there was no clear analysis of this data as to its tie to academic expectations. The Visiting Team recommends that the professional staff receive training and devote professional development time to analyzing the data to improve academic achievement.

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 professional development schedules for 2011-2012 and 2010-2011 included in the self-study focus mainly on department collaboration, with some effort in 2010-2011 on grade-level collaboration. Some interdisciplinary collaboration by individual teachers was noted in several of the department analysis. The primary focus of professional development was not clear to the Visiting Team, and so it is

recommended that professional development be focused on those areas that will have the greatest impact on student learning and achievement.

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

A school-wide scoring tool has not been implemented to assess the DRSLs (the partial exception to this being DRSL #1, which includes proficiency in literacy and written expression). Evidence of school-wide literacy is seen in the school's "Paws to Read" initiative to read 10,000 books. Evidence of written expression is seen in improvement of scores among virtually every group and subgroup on the Direct Writing Assessment between 2010 and 2011. Several departments use My Access for accessing written expression, but no data was provided or analysis given on this tool's success. The other two DRSLs do not appear to have any tangible means of assessing student achievement in these areas of focus. Stating the DRSLs in measurable terms will help the faculty develop a data-driven cycle of implementation and reflection.

CHAPTER 3: NORTHWEST SUPPORT STANDARDS

Leadership and Organization:

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

The school has established an academic learning climate in which teaching and learning are supported. There is a clear and strong focus on instructional goals. The students and staff feel valued and important. Extraordinary efforts are made by the school to honor the work of students and staff. The administration is commended for supporting instructional time, and for the academic learning climate that exists at the school.

Student and staff accomplishments are recognized and celebrated. Reward systems provide public acknowledgement of outstanding performance. The Visiting Team commends the continued emphasis and support from the administration, teachers, and community for student celebrations.

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

The Visiting Team commends the leadership at Matheson Junior High School for a strong commitment to the use of data to make decisions throughout the building. The faculty receives particular commendation for the school's use of student writing and reading data to differentiate the particular learning needs of individual students.

Decisions affecting the instructional process are based on validated, research-based practices of high-performing schools, and the decision-making process is collaborative and provides opportunities for the involvement of some of the school's stakeholders.

The Visiting Team encourages the school's leadership team to continue to reach out to a greater variety of different stakeholder groups, including minority parents, in the data study and decision-making process. The Visiting Team also recommends that the school's leadership team analyze the school's profile data, including disaggregating the data to identify additional gaps and assist in the creation of ongoing improvement planning efforts.

c) *To what extent does the 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 intentionally designed for the purpose of maximizing student learning. The Visiting Team commends the school's administration, as stakeholders report that the most valuable strength of the administration is its ability to manage and use resources in the most effective and efficient manner to ensure a safe and engaged student learning experience.

The allocation and use of resources are aligned with the school's goals. The Visiting Team recommends a continued emphasis on aligning ALL resources with the school's desired results for student learning.

d) *To what extent does the school leadership empower the entire school community and encourage commitment, participation, collaboration, and shared responsibility for student learning through meaningful roles in the decision-making process?*

The Visiting Team commends the administration for the shared leadership that exists between the administration and the teacher leadership team. The teacher leadership team feels empowered and encouraged, and that they are valued members of the decision-making process.

The Visiting Team recommends that the administration and teacher leadership teams begin to more actively strive to engage ALL stakeholders in the decision-making process, specifically focusing on engaging parents from all demographic groups in meaningful roles.

e) *To what extent has the school established a formal system through which each student has an adult staff member who knows the student well and assists the student in achieving the school-wide expectations for student learning?*

The Visiting Team commends the school for implementing a common advisory for all students. The school is also commended for beginning the START program this year, wherein all teachers "adopt" two at-risk students and assist them in their learning

expectations and goals. The Visiting Team recommends that the school continue its individualized approach to ensuring that ALL students receive the assistance necessary for them to be successful.

CHAPTER 4: NORTHWEST SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT STANDARD

Culture of Continual Improvement:

a) *To what extent has the school developed and implemented a comprehensive school improvement plan using* Collaborating for Student Achievement*, the Utah accreditation/school improvement process, that is reviewed and revised on an ongoing basis?*

The Granite School District has instituted a STATIS program in which all schools must participate. Matheson Junior High School has developed and is beginning to implement a comprehensive school improvement plan that aligns with the requirements of the school district. This report, while not necessarily following the *Collaborating for Student Achievement* process, does align with the school's DRSLs and the activities necessary to ensure their full implementation within the learning environment.

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?*

It is recommended that Matheson Junior High create a plan for professional development based on the school's action plan and ensure that the action plan is aligned with the school's DRSLs.

The school is to be commended for its effective use of limited collaboration time. This collaboration is driving capability building throughout the faculty. The school is encouraged to begin using the collaboration time to analyzing student learning data as well, and to drive curriculum development, student assessment, and academic excellence throughout the school.

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 school has a strong commitment to continual growth of the faculty and students at Matheson Junior High School. There is also very strong engagement by the faculty in the learning processes that drive students' success.

The Visiting Team recommends an intentional review of the school's new action plan, to ensure that the plan is aligned with the DRSLs and to continue the creation and

selection of key indicators that may be used in the measurement of the DRSLs and thereby the full accomplishment of the plan.

The current improvement plan addresses the critical need areas identified by the Visiting Team, with the exception of the necessity for greater disaggregation of student data and for teachers to use that data more often in the day-to-day development of curriculum and assessments for learning. It is recommended that the school develop ongoing professional development training on using data to drive student learning, as well as embedded and consistent faculty instruction and hands-on training in the use of technology inside and outside of the classroom to engage students more fully in their education.

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

The administration and leadership team at Matheson Junior High School are commended for creating an environment and conditions that strongly support productive change and continuous improvement.

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

Matheson Junior High has engaged stakeholders in a comprehensive review of the school's mission, beliefs, and DRSLs. The Visiting Team commends the school for its work in narrowing the focus of the DRSLs to achieve the current focus on three attainable desired results for students. Current beliefs align with the current DRSLs and are beginning to drive the student learning experience at Matheson Junior High School.

The school has made tremendous progress in creating a safe environment that is conducive to student learning, and is to be commended for its current emphasis on extending that safe environment to the community. The school is encouraged to ensure that the current school improvement plan engages all stakeholders, aligns with the current DRSLs, and is focused on encouraging participation.

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

The Visiting Team commends the school for its attention to the major recommendations of the prior Visiting Team. Particularly commendable are the narrowed focus of the DRSLs, the creation of a regularly published parent newsletter, and the current self-study department analysis.

The Visiting Team recommends that departments continue to investigate strategies to enhance the focus on the DRSLs within each classroom, as well as learning opportunities for the students, in order to better prepare them to meet the expectations for learning at Matheson Junior High School.

The Visiting Team also encourages the school to continue their study of interdisciplinary teaming, particularly as the school implements the common core and the opportunities to team core classes with elective classes in creating learning activities that engage all students in the core learning required within each class.

CHAPTER 5: COMMUNITY BUILDING

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

The Visiting Team found evidence of a strong working relationship among the teachers, staff and community. The school fosters a bond between the PTSA, Community Council, administration, students and teachers. Stakeholders work collaboratively to achieve the goal of Global Citizenship by creating a community of caring. Teachers use their Friday early-out time to collaborate within departments, attend professional development training and create teaming strategies to develop their DRSL of Academic Achievement.

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

Matheson Junior High School actively engages parents as partners in the education process through a variety of activities, including parent-teacher conferences, Night Forums, and Tele-parent. The Visiting Team observed that teachers, parents, staff members and students actively engaged in a Community of Caring. Each student is respectful of others and strives to be culturally unbiased, recognizing that, despite ethnic differences, they are all "Tigers." Students, faculty members, and parents recite the motto "the Matheson Way" as a mantra for positive behaviors in and out of the school setting. The Visiting Team acknowledges that Matheson Junior High School has a highly cohesive staff with a strong commitment to student academic achievement as well as character development.

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

The Visiting Team noted that the Community Council and PTSA were highly involved in the self-study process at Matheson Junior High School. Each focus group was comprised of students, parents, and staff members. In visiting with the various groups, it was apparent to the Visiting Team that the participants were valued members of the team, who were allowed to give input and felt that their concerns were heard and their opinions validated. The focus groups are vested in the desire to do what is in the best interests of students, and to do whatever is needed to provide for social and academic success.

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

The Visiting Team found evidence that stakeholders are informed of school improvement through a variety of media. The school maintains a quarterly newsletter, a website, and Tele-parent, which informs parents of upcoming events and testing results. Parents are notified of student awards through letters mailed home. Parents state that teachers are quick to reply to e-mails and are willing to make personal phone calls informing parents of student progress. The PTSA and students are currently involved in a fundraising effort to install a digital marquee, which will offer more timely and accurate information to the community. The Visiting Team suggests that the teachers and staff make a concerted effort to make sure all stakeholders, including those who are not English speaking, are informed of student progress and other school information.

CHAPTER 6: MAJOR COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Commendations:

- The Visiting Team commends the staff of Matheson Junior High School for creating a clean, safe, and positive learning environment for students.

- The Visiting Team commends the staff for maintaining a focus on student learning while navigating through the STATIS and accreditation process and implementing new state and district mandates and programs.

- The Visiting Team commends all stakeholders of Matheson Junior High School for the increases made in student achievement over the past several years. The Visiting Team recognizes the effort and contribution made by all stakeholders in ensuring that adequate yearly progress is maintained.

- The Visiting Team commends the leadership team of Matheson Junior High School for its clear focus, direction and emphasis on continual student improvement.

- The Visiting Team commends the staff members for their attention to individual student needs, both within and outside the classroom.

- The Visiting Team commends the staff and students of Matheson Junior High School for internalizing the concepts promoted in the TIGERS and “the Matheson Way” initiatives. The Visiting Team found these concepts to be encompassed in the implementation of the school’s DRSLs and the basis on which personal, social, and classroom behavior is grounded.

Recommendations:

- The Visiting Team recommends that the Matheson Junior High School staff analyze the data collected, including disaggregated data, and provide training and collaboration time to use that data to drive instruction to achieve academic excellence. In addition, data analysis should help determine specific goals to instill both global citizenship and life skills.

- The Visiting Team recommends that the Matheson Junior High School staff continue to implement programs and strategies that create a culturally responsive community. This includes, but is not limited to, using research-based strategies, such as sheltered instruction, content and language objectives, and following the Big 8.

- The Visiting Team recommends that the Matheson Junior High School staff continue to systematically implement technology use in and out of the classroom, by implementing new technology where needed and by creating a sustainable professional development plan to help the staff's capabilities to improve student learning.