The Report of the
Accreditation Visiting Team

Monument Valley High School

P.O. Box 360008
Monument Valley, Utah 84536

March 29, 2012

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Monument Valley High School

P.O. Box 360008
Monument Valley, Utah 84536

March 29, 2012

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword iii
Utah State Board of Education iv
San Juan School District Board of Education and District Administration 1
Monument Valley High School Administration and Staff 2
Monument Valley High School Mission Statement, Belief Statements, and DRSLs 3
Members of the Visiting Team 5
Visiting Team Report 6
Chapter 1: School Profile 6
    Suggested Areas for Further Inquiry 7
Chapter 2: Northwest Accreditation Commission (Northwest)
    Teaching and Learning Standards 7
    Mission, Beliefs and Desired Results for Student Learning (DRSLs) 7
    Curriculum 8
    Instruction 9
    Assessment 10
Chapter 3: Northwest Support Standards 11
    Leadership and Organization 11
    School Services 13
    Facilities and Finances 13
Chapter 4: Northwest School Improvement Standard 13
Chapter 5: Community Building 15
Chapter 6: Major Commendations and Recommendations of the Visiting Team 16

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, March 29, 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 Monument Valley 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 Patricia Seltzer is also commended.

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

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

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MONUMENT VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL

ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF

School Administration

Patricia Seltzer ..... Principal
Boyd Silversmith ..... Assistant Principal

Counseling

Jenae Herrera ..... Counselor

Support Staff

Alyce Barrett
Lula Bedonie
Esther Begaye
Marilyn Benally
James Black
Michael Chee
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Christy Parrish
Vanessa Russell
Jack Seltzer
Colby Sharpe
Marlene Smith
Steven Smith
Powers Whiskers

MONUMENT VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL

MISSION STATEMENT

Together, we can do it.

BELIEF STATEMENTS

Expectations

- Everyone can learn.
- Everyone has a right to learn.
- Everyone has the right to be respected.

Responsibility

- Everyone has the responsibility to actively engage in learning.
- Everyone needs to respect technology and use in appropriately.
- Everyone has the responsibility to allow others to learn.
- Parents and guardians have the responsibility to be partners in the education of their children.
- Everyone has a responsibility to make a positive contribution to the school.
- Everyone has the responsibility to follow the laws of the State and Nation.

Safety

- Everyone has a right to fell safe at school.
- Everyone has the responsibility to actively contribute to the safe environment of the school.

DESIRED RESULTS FOR STUDENT LEARNING (DRSLs)

Monument Valley High School's desired results for student learning (DRSLs) are as follows:

Students will be responsible citizens.

Indicators:

- Use appropriate strategies to solve conflicts
- Understand and respect rights of self and others

Students will demonstrate critical thinking, problem solving, and decision making across the curriculum and in daily life.

Indicators:

- Ability to set goals, evaluate progress and request help as needed
- Ability to solve problems and make healthy choices

Students will be able to express thoughts and ideas through verbal, written and artistic media and be able to listen, read and understand the communication of others.

Indicators:

- Mastery of UBSCT, Six Traits, and other mandated assessments, art, and music projects and other curriculum-related projects

Date of visit: March 29, 2012

MEMBERS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Dr. Roy Hoyt, Hurricane Middle School, Washington School District

Dr. Howard Foster, Utah State Office of Education

VISITING TEAM REPORT

MONUMENT VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL

CHAPTER 1: SCHOOL PROFILE

Monument Valley is located on the Utah/Arizona border, in the southeast corner of the state. It is a small community that is highly recognized worldwide for the huge stone monoliths that attract and fascinate tourists, mainly during the months of April through October. Tourism is the main industry of the community, but it is seasonal and unpredictable. Monument Valley hosts tourists from all over the world and continues to be the setting for numerous movies, commercials, music videos, and magazine advertisements. However, most families have incomes far below poverty level. The average yearly income for the area is $8,000. In addition, 86 percent of the students qualify for free lunch and fee waivers.

Monument Valley High School is a public junior/high school located on the Navajo Reservation in San Juan District in Southeastern Utah. Opened in 1983, Monument Valley High School has a student population of 235 students, all Navajo, from the surrounding communities of Oljato, Halchita-Mexican Hat, Douglas Mesa, and Monument Valley.

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

The school has analyzed its CRT data and identified areas of strength and areas that require improvement. The report revealed that the school has made steady improvement in CRT language arts scores over the last five years. Science shows a steady increase in scores for 2007 to 2010 (from 13 percent to 29 percent); however, these scores took a dip in 2010. Math scores continue to be the most challenging area for MVHS. CRT results reveal that over the past five years math scores have vacillated between 13 and 19 percent. The school’s attendance rate for 2011 was 74 percent, and the graduation rate was 97 percent.

The profile reveals that 25 percent of students were designated as ELL and 50 percent as homeless.

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

The school needs to organize the profile to reflect who is learning and who is not learning. The school should also include such information as disaggregation by gender, grade level, special education, and ELL status. The profile report seemed somewhat scattered. The Visiting Team suggests that the school reorganize the profile so that all pertinent information is more accessible.

The school should reconvene the focus groups to analyze school effectiveness, utilizing the National Study of School Evaluation (NSSE) indicators of quality to provide information related to Monument Valley High School’s organizational

effectiveness. The school should also have each department analyze its effectiveness by addressing the essential questions for departmental analysis.

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

The document does not include all components of the self-study. Specifically, the document has excluded focus group and departmental analyses. However, the school has utilized available profile data to identify the most pressing needs in academic and behavioral areas.

Suggested Areas for Further Inquiry:

- Include information showing graduation rates over time.
- Have each of the department complete the "Essential Questions for Departmental Analysis."
- Track students following graduation.
- Reconvene the focus groups and utilize the National Study of School Evaluation (NSSE) Indicators of Quality to provide information related to Monument High School's organizational effectiveness.

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?*

Interviews with staff members, parents, and students indicated some participation by stakeholders, but this was limited to members of the School Community Council. The mission statement was being revised during the visit, but staff members had not yet reached a consensus on its final wording. Several members of the staff seemed to be unaware of DRSLs, but once the Visiting Team rephrased the term as "what students should be able to know and do," they were able to articulate some of these goals. The school is encouraged to use common language, as outlined in the USOE's "collaborating for student's success" guidelines.

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

The Visiting Team found that the school's mission and belief statements to be closely aligned to support the school's DRSLs.

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

The Visiting Team found some evidence of assessments being used to indicate student achievement and growth with respect to the DRSLs. The school has primarily used CRT scores to assess student achievement, but has yet to develop the means for measuring all DRSLs. The Visiting Team encourages the school to revisit and revise the current DRSLs, as well as develop the means for measuring them.

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?*

It was evident to the Visiting Team as its members walked through the hall of Monument Valley High School, talking to teachers, students and staff members, that the school is providing a good educational experience for its students. The faculty and staff have an understanding of the school's learning expectations, and most students seemed to be enjoying their school experience.

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 members of the Monument Valley High School teaching staff all adhere to the Utah Core Curriculum as the source of their curriculum in their respective disciplines. The staff has identified essential knowledge and skills and given it priority in the development of their curriculum. Further, the curriculum also focuses on support measures and progression, and challenges all students according to their abilities.

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

The Visiting Team observed many students engaged in inquiry, problem solving, and higher-order thinking activities. To a certain extent, some of the students have access to a variety of college-level courses, research projects, community service, and a variety of learning strategies. Also, the curriculum is coordinated with other grade level disciplines, while assessments are assessed accordingly.

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 members of the Monument Valley High School teaching staff lack collaboration with other disciplines outside their departments; however, they are very supportive of one another. The staff acknowledges and welcomes more collaboration, training, and professional development to enhance what is lacking with the school's DRSLs.

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

The members of Monument Valley High School teaching staff use their own assessments, and a few have individualized teaching strategies to address the needs of their students. The teachers are also aware of both students who need assistance and students they felt have moved forward. The assessments and data were used effectively to address the progress of students.

Instruction:

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

It is apparent that the staff at Monument Valley High School is well grounded in a wide variety of instructional strategies. The Visiting Team's conversations with 17 staff members indicated that they employ several instructional strategies to reach their students. The staff is encouraged to increase its ability to engage all learners and continue the emphasis on improving instructional practices that reach all students.

The staff should be complimented for its effort to design culturally relevant learning experiences that build on existing contextual knowledge. Despite the financial constraints, the school also makes an effort to offer elective classes on subjects such as the Navajo language, welding, and automobiles. Some students pointed out the academic distance learning program through Utah State Concurrent Enrollment as an important part of class offerings.

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?*

It was not clear to the Visiting Team the staff has developed strategies for instruction that builds the capacity for explicitly teaching the identified DRSL in every classroom. The school's DRSL to "demonstrate critical thinking and problem solving" was evidenced by the school's leveled math intervention program, where all students work on math three days per week. This intervention is in addition to the student's regular math class, and enlists the help of all Monument Valley High School teachers in the teaching of math concepts.

The school is encouraged to reevaluate its DRSLs and put in place assessments for effectiveness. These DRSLs should be communicated and clear to every stakeholder and embedded in classroom instruction.

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 administration uses data to guide professional development and identify instructional needs. Teachers are asked to look at data and test information in order to make curricular decisions and modify their instructional strategies. The principal feels this is one the school's strengths.

d) *To what extent are teachers proficient in their content area, knowledgeable about current research on effective instructional approaches, and reflective on their own practices?*

The Visiting Team observed that teachers are knowledgeable about their subject areas and focused on the State Core. It is noted that in the school's self-study report, a strong emphasis was placed by the staff members on the desire for continuous improvement in their practice. The Visiting Team also noted the willingness of the staff to work together for improvement, as demonstrated by the institutionalization of professional learning communities (PLCs).

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

All classrooms have Smart Boards, and the teachers are actively using them. In addition, all students are given technology projects as part of their assessments in a variety of curricular areas. Technology is used more in some classes than in others. Students enjoy the technology available to them, and report that it helps in their learning.

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?*

Several classrooms had lesson/classroom objectives written on the board, and a few announced their objectives before class. Classroom assessments are clearly tied to the performance-based standards identified by teachers. Students know the expected level of performance and how to meet it. There is a systematic approach to assessing student learning.

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

The classroom teachers at Monument Valley High School are currently using state standardized assessments and have developed their individual subject assessment for

their respective disciplines. This information is shared among staff members within their subject areas.

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

The teaching staff uses the data at the end of each teaching section for its academic outcomes to determine student progress. Also, this information is shared among the core classes. The Visiting Team suggests that the school continue to work toward sharing the information with all subject areas and continue collaborating for the achievement of students.

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?*

It was evident to the Visit Team that there is a formal program for professional development. The school has scheduled an early out twice each week, providing time that has been utilized for district and school professional development. Monument Valley High School has collected data for teacher use, and has given teachers the opportunity to collaborate and use their data to determine the progress of their students. New personnel have focused on data for student learning, attendance, discipline, graduation, and the prevention of dropouts.

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

It was not clear to the Visiting Team the school was using a scoring tool to assess the identified DRSLs. The school has primarily used CRT scores to assess student achievement, but has yet to develop the means for measuring all DRSLs. The Visiting Team encourages the school to revisit and revise the current DRSLs as well as develop the means for measuring them.

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 Monument Valley High School has established an academic learning climate in which teaching and learning are supported. It is clear that collaborative efforts to provide professional development have been well received by the faculty as a result of the collaboration between teachers and the district/school administration to outline and develop the professional development plan.

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 administration is very aware of the importance of the analysis of data in making sound decisions related to student achievement. The administration has encouraged the staff to use a wide variety of assessments to obtain an accurate picture of student achievement. The school staff has also been encouraged to analyze data on both the classroom and the individual student levels when looking at changes in classroom instruction and individual student interventions.

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?*

Monument Valley High's students, parents, and staff praise the school administration for the creation of a safe and positive learning environment, and for giving the school focus and a sense of direction to address student learning. School-wide policies and operational procedures are consistent with the school's beliefs and mission, and are designed to maximize opportunities for successful 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?*

Due to the size of the school and the fact that it is located on a reservation, the school is an integral part of the community in general. Monument Valley's administration provides many opportunities for community involvement in the school. For instance, the school's media center is open two evenings each week for the community to check out books and use computers. Members of the community trust and respect the administration of the school, and believe their voices are heard.

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 Monument Valley community has a strong sense of belonging. The staff members know most students well. They are neighbors and friends with families of the school, and participate in community and religious activities together.

Students at Monument Valley High School have a daily advisory period where teachers provide academic/individual support. Conversations with students revealed that teachers are very approachable and make excellent advocates for student 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 Northwest, which requires specific responses regarding the physical plant, finances, audit of school records, advertising, etc.

CHAPTER 4: NORTHWEST SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT STANDARD

Culture of Continual Improvement:

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

It is the opinion of the Visiting Team that Monument Valley High School has implemented a system-wide and comprehensive school improvement program plan with a focus on collaboration using the Defour professional learning community model. The school has set aside Tuesday as a late-start day to give teachers from Monument Valley High time to collaborate with teachers from the other schools in the district. The staff has also used Friday afternoons as time for collaboration. It was evident to the Visiting Team that not all components of the self-analysis had been completed. Focus groups and departmental analyses were not included in the self-study. The involvement of parents and students in the process was limited.

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

The school's organizational system and culture are supportive of professional development. The school is part of a district-endorsed Tuesday late-start time to allow for professional development. This time is mostly dictated by the district and involves collaboration between high schools within the San Juan District. The school also has early-out time on Friday in which the school is able to collaborate.

c) *To what extent is the new/revised school-wide action plan adequate in addressing the critical areas for follow-up and is there sufficient commitment to the action plan, school-wide and system-wide?*

The action plan, expressed as SMART goals in the self-analysis, addresses critical areas in math, language arts, and behavior. The SMART goals timelines, as listed for math and language arts, are not given as a multiple-year plan, but to the end of the 2011 school year. The school has put in place extra time and resources to address the academic needs of their students.

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

To a moderate extent, the Visiting Team observed that the school creates conditions that support productive change and continuous improvement. The staff meets weekly as a faculty or district-wide by department to discuss student achievement, core curricula, and best practices. As a whole, the school is committed to sustaining improvement and renewal.

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

Monument Valley High School has made tremendous efforts to foster the capacity for improvement through and ongoing professional development plan. Resources have been dedicated to supporting professional development. Administrators support and encourage the staff to take advantage of workshops and in-service opportunities offered by the state and school district. The school has scheduled an early out twice each week, providing time that has been utilized for district and school professional development. The Visiting Team encourages the school to use some of this time for school-wide training and in-service in order to meet school goals. It is evident that the school has challenges, but has put in place the support and programs to raise achievement.

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

The utilization of assessment and testing data to drive instruction was recommended by the last accreditation team. The school has made some progress in this regard, and as a result has put programs in place to meet the academic needs of the students. The school has been successful in implementing weekly collaboration time in the form of late-start Tuesday and early-out Friday. Some teachers expressed the need to spend more of this collaboration time to work on best practices.

The current Visiting Team, like the previous one, reminds the stakeholders of Monument Valley High School that improvement is a continuous process. Due to the challenges in meeting achievement goals, and the turnover of staff, the stakeholders should review and modify the action plan on a yearly basis in order to keep the school focused.

CHAPTER 5: COMMUNITY BUILDING

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

The Visiting Team was able to interview a few community members who were satisfied and complimented the school leadership for their dedication and desire to make the school available and its programs more positive for the community. The relationship between the community and the school is positive. Many teachers are active within the community through civic duties, while the school shares events and invites and welcomes the community and other social programs to the school.

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

The Visiting Team recognizes the use of technologically based collaborative networks for the support of student learning, and encourages the school to continue with these lines of communication. The remoteness and lack of Internet accessibility makes communication a challenge for many parents. At the same time, the Visiting Team suggests that the school remember those stakeholders who do not have technological capability, and consider additional means to provide them with the same information through multiple avenues. The collaboration network has difficulty in getting the information to the community; therefore, a stronger effort will have to be made by the school. The Visiting Team observed this activity, which will need some interventions.

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

The Visiting Team observed that the school lacked some collaboration on the self-study process within the community. However, the community was nevertheless satisfied with the leadership of the school and with teachers' efforts to do a better job for their students, and those interviewed made reference to providing more assistance in the collaborative process. The Visiting Team suggests that the staff and administration look for additional opportunities to include parents and community members in the improvement process.

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

The school improvement data are identified through surveys and documents which are shared among the teaching staff only. This data has given the school leadership an opportunity to set goals, improve teaching and learning, and implement best practices. However, this communication does not reach all the stakeholders. The Visiting Team suggests that the school make communication to stakeholders a priority.

CHAPTER 6: MAJOR COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Commendations:

- The Visiting Team commends the school for identifying the greatest needs of the school. Goals in such areas as academic improvement, student behavior, increased graduation rates, and the training and recruiting of staff at Monument Valley High School have been identified, and to some degree are currently working to improve conditions at the school. Resources have also been put in place to support students in academic areas.

- The Visiting Team commends the school for its commitment to professional development. The school has established time for collaborating at least once a week, and most teachers have taken advantage of this opportunity.

- The Visiting Team commends the school for its efforts toward creating a positive culture and climate conducive to teaching and learning. Students believed their needs were being met and that teachers were committed to providing them with a quality education.

- The Visiting Team commends the school for effort made to tie the academic learning experiences of the students to the cultural values of the students and the community. The community recognizes the fact that the school is committed and sensitive to the specific cultural needs of students.

- The Visiting Team commends the school for creating a community of caring. Students are aware of available help, feel teachers are sensitive to their needs, and believe they have teachers they can go to for any academic or personal assistance.

- The Visiting Team commends the school for its use of technology. Most classrooms have Smart Boards, which are used by teachers to meet the needs of students. The school has multiple computers available for students to use.

- The Visiting Team commends the Monument Valley High School administration for its commitment to the school and community. Teachers, students, and parents spoke highly of the efforts of the administration.

Recommendations:

- The Visiting Team recommends that the school continue to organize and disaggregate data for the school profile. Information within the profile was displaced within different areas of the self-analysis document. Monument Valley High is encouraged to continue to utilize assessment and testing data to drive instruction. The school has made progress in this regard, but more work needs to be done in answering the question, “Who is learning and who is not learning?”

- The Visiting Team recommends that the school goals reflect a six-year plan. The timelines of the current goals within the action plan are not clear. The Visiting Team encourages the staff members to be sharply focused on the achievement goals they have set for their students, make adjustments as necessary, and celebrate with all stakeholders as goals are met.

- The Visiting Team recommends that the school complete the self-analysis process through departmental and focus groups analysis. DRSLs should be reviewed, revised, and posted throughout the school, and indicators should be developed to assess students' demonstration of the DRSLs. The school should also develop the means for measuring the DRSLs. Stakeholders should be included in this process.

- The Visiting Team recommends that the school continue its efforts in the area of professional development. Continued focus on student achievement and best practices are also highly encouraged.