The Report of the
Accreditation Visiting Team

Morgan High School

55 North 200 East
Morgan, Utah 84050

March 13-14, 2012

Utah State Office of Education
250 East 500 South
P.O. Box 144200
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Morgan High School

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Morgan, Utah 84050

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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, March 13-14, 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 Morgan 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 Wade Murdock is also commended.

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

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*Board of Regents Appointments
** UCAT Representative
*** CMAC Representative Appointment
**** USBA Advisory Representative Appointment
***** Charter School Representative Appointment

MORGAN SCHOOL DISTRICT

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D'Lynn Poll .....Business Administrator
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Roxanne Rich.....Director–Food Service
Darren Garner .....Director–Maintenance
Nadine Bambrough .....School Nurse
Linda Taylor..... Social Worker
Terry Allen.....Director–Technology
Mike Shope .....Supervisor–Transportation

MORGAN HIGH SCHOOL

ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF

School Administration

Wade T. Murdock ..... Principal
Reynold T. Hoopes ..... Assistant Principal

Counseling

Jim Wiscombe ..... Head Counselor
Domini Sepulveda-Olson ..... Counselor

Support Staff

Jana Brown ..... Head Secretary
Mary Jane Phillips ..... Secretary
Cheri Mathews ..... Secretary
Wendy Mikesell ..... Secretary
Patty Romero ..... Attendance Secretary
Marnie Christensen ..... Registrar
Reynold T. Hoopes ..... Athletic Director
Chris Johnson ..... School Technology Specialist
Rob Taylor ..... School Resource Officer

Faculty

Gaylene Bateman ..... Math
Lynden Bennett ..... Photography/Media
Shasta Breshears ..... English
Chris Carrigan ..... Foods/Adult Roles
Layne Carter ..... History
Chris Deitsch ..... Business
Tara Ferrin ..... Physics/Chemistry/Mathematics
Destiny Field ..... Special Education
Jeremy Floyd ..... Mathematics
Holly George ..... DATC/American Sign Language
Cherril Grose/Brittany Jensen ..... Foods/Sewing
Steve Gudmundson ..... Woods/CAD
Vanessa Hall ..... Mathematics
Dallin Hardy ..... History
Emilee Haslam ..... Special Education

Megan Haslam ..... Agriculture Science
Valeri Hoopes ..... Science
Nancy Judd ..... Art/French
John Kelly ..... Special Education
Robert Kilmer ..... DATC/Welding
Sergio Macias ..... Spanish
Brad Matthews ..... Physical Education
Chad McLean ..... Band
Michael Mills ..... Choir
John Millward ..... English
Linda Morrison ..... English
Carol Pentz ..... English
John Pincock ..... Ceramics/Mathematics
John Rock ..... Medical Anatomy/Health/Drivers Education
Emily Rose ..... Business/Yearbook/Internship
Stephanie Simister ..... Mathematics
Joe Sisson ..... History/Psychology
Ann Taggart ..... English
Jeff Toller ..... Science/Physical Education
Heidi Valdez ..... Mathematics
Laura Wheeler ..... Science
Candice Wilder ..... Theatre
Liz Wiscombe ..... Physical Education

MORGAN HIGH SCHOOL

MISSION STATEMENT

The Morgan County School District Community stands united in the pursuit of educational excellence. It is our mission to create a challenging learning environment that emphasizes literacy and numeracy. We seek to assist students as they prepare for responsible citizenship, meaningful work, advanced education, and life-long learning.

BELIEF STATEMENTS

- Every student should be afforded high quality instruction and curriculum guided by the use of effective assessment.
- Every student should be accountable and actively engaged in a challenging learning environment.
- Every student has the right to a safe, caring, and supportive learning environment.
- Every student can learn and has responsibility to develop social, academic, and technological skills.
- Every student should be given the opportunity to broaden high/her knowledge and skills through participation in high quality school sponsored activities that extend the classroom curriculum.

DESIRED RESULTS FOR STUDENT LEARNING (DRSLs)

Literacy and Numeracy

Students will demonstrate high levels of literacy and numeracy (reading, writing, mathematics, and technology).

Responsible Citizenship

Students will develop problem solving skills and demonstrate the ability to make informed, objective decisions in preparation for responsible citizenship and growth.

Healthy Lifestyles

Students will understand the benefits of a healthy lifestyle, the risks of dangerous behaviors, and appropriate social skills.

Date of visit: March 13-14, 2012

MEMBERS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Deborah Sorensen, Murray High School, Murray School District, Visiting Team Co-chairperson

Vicci Gappmayer, Wasatch School District, Visiting Team Co-chairperson

Gary Allen, Bear River High School, Box Elder School District

Dan Barney, South Ogden Junior High, Weber School District

VISITING TEAM REPORT

MORGAN HIGH SCHOOL

CHAPTER 1: SCHOOL PROFILE

Morgan High school is located in the beautiful mountain valley of Morgan, Utah. It is a small rural school with a population of 734 students in grades nine through twelve. The population has grown due to the large number of families moving into the valley. Many students are bused to school from ranches and homes in outlying areas, yet students have a strong sense of collegiality and school spirit. Trojan pride is expressed by students and parents alike, who report that their high school is “the best in the state.”

The school is under the leadership of Principal Wade T. Murdock and employs 75 faculty and staff members. In addition to comprehensive academic programs at Morgan High School, there are a number of concurrent enrollment classes, AP classes, and EDNET classes in which students can earn college credit.

The school has a one-hundred-year tradition of excellence in the classroom and on the field of play. Display cases in the halls and library are filled with trophies and banners indicating outstanding student achievement in academics and athletics.

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

The student population is composed almost exclusively of white Caucasian students, with only 50 students of other racial descent. Seventeen percent of the students are economically disadvantaged, and only three students are homeless. The school’s ESL population consists of eight students. One percent of the students have 504 accommodations, and eight percent qualify for special ed. services. Only eight students have been absent 10 or more school days. Graduation rates are consistently high, ranging from 91 percent to 96 percent in the last five years. Only five to seven percent of students are enrolled in AP classes, with an average pass rate of 65.2 percent over the last five years. Scores, however, have dramatically improved since 2009.

CRT scores are strong in language arts, while math and science scores lag behind. Aggregate school ACT scores enjoyed an upward trend from 2007 to 2010. When the entire school took the ACT in 2011, these aggregate scores dropped significantly.

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

The Visiting Team suggests that the school continue to systematically collect and analyze data to measure student progress and identify areas for future growth. As data is gathered, teachers and administrators can discuss and reflect on the information to discover trends and patterns of learning. Although the subgroup population is extremely small, data should be disaggregated to the extent possible by gender,

ethnicity, economic level, and special education status to determine gaps in achievement. In addition, teachers should begin to develop common formative and summative assessments for common courses. By working together, teachers can identify areas of strength and weakness in their instruction as well as student achievement.

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

Morgan High is to be commended for developing a thorough and candid profile. The Visiting Team notes that graduation rates have improved and enrollment in AP classes has increased over the last five years. Students continue to achieve above state averages on CRT tests, and the pass rates on AP tests have improved. The school has very few safe school violations, and absenteeism is low.

Suggested Areas for Further Inquiry:

- The Visiting Team recommends that the school continue to examine data to identify individual students who need academic assistance.

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?

The Visiting Team found significant evidence that all stakeholders were involved in revising the school's mission and belief statements. A committee of administrators, faculty, staff, students, and community members reviewed the mission and belief statements to ensure they reflected the current philosophy of the school. After many open discussions, the mission statement was unanimously approved by the Community Council and the school staff.

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

The mission and beliefs are closely aligned with the DRSLs. The mission statement addresses a challenging learning environment that emphasizes literacy and numeracy. It also addresses the need for students to prepare for responsible citizenship, meaningful work, advanced education, and life-long learning.

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

Morgan High School included descriptors for each DRSL. However, no assessment plan is in place to measure progress toward the DRSLs. The Visiting Team recommends that the school develop indicators that are student-centered and measurable.

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*?

Teachers and students are well aware of the school's mission, beliefs, and DRSLs. As the school moves forward, all activities, professional development plans, procedures, and policies should fall under the umbrella of the DRSLs.

Curriculum:

a) *To what extent does the staff work collaboratively to ensure the curriculum is based on clearly defined standards, the Utah Core Curriculum, reflecting the Utah* Life Skills: A Guide to Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions for Success*?*

The Visiting Team found that Morgan High School has based its curriculum on the Utah State Core Curriculum and the Utah Life Skills document. The school is working to incorporate the new common core standards. Resources and professional development are focused on implementing state standards.

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

The Visiting Team found evidence that the school provides a wide variety of curricular opportunities. In addition to regular education classes, the school offers EDNET courses, CTE courses, and AP courses. The Visiting Team found an array learning activities in classrooms that included discussions, PowerPoint presentations, and cooperative learning activities that engaged students in inquiry, problem-solving, and higher-order thinking skills.

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

Due to the small size of the school, few faculty members teach common courses. Some teachers collaborate during their preparation period, or before or after school, but the schedule does not provide a regular time for collaboration. As the school adopts the PLC model, teachers can collaboratively infuse the DRSLs into their curriculum. The Visiting Team found evidence that the faculty fully supports the institutionalization of the DRSLs.

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

While Morgan High School has disaggregated standardized test data, the Visiting Team found little evidence of other systematic assessment methods. The school is encouraged to develop and institute common formative and summative assessments to ensure that all students reach the intended learning outcomes.

Instruction:

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

The Visiting Team found evidence of varied instructional methods including direct instruction, cooperative learning activities, hands-on projects, and student presentations. Teachers exhibit knowledge of research-based instructional strategies and they have implemented best practices into the classroom.

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?*

Through the accreditation process teachers at Morgan High School have begun to focus their instruction to explicitly teach the DRSLs. Writing skills are improved as students are required to write quality essays, research papers, and lab reports throughout the school. Citizenship is addressed in the advisory period as students reflect on qualities such as hard work, integrity, and honesty. In addition, teachers emphasize the importance of healthy lifestyles by making connections within their regular curriculum.

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 professional development program is aligned with the school's DRSLs and plans for school improvement. The school provides opportunities for teachers to participate in professional development activities to improve their instructional practice. The implementation of PLCs will further provide opportunities for teachers to collaborate on improving their instructional methods.

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?*

Morgan High School has a qualified staff. Many teachers hold multiple endorsements that allow them to teach in diverse departments. Teachers reflect on their own practice as they collaborate in faculty meetings, department meetings, and professional development meetings. They regularly review student achievement data

to understand how they might modify practices and implement effective strategies to improve student performance.

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

Due to equipment and building limitations, the use of technology in Morgan High School is inconsistent. Some departments have ready access to technology, while others are severely limited. To the extent that they are able, teachers are employing technology such as web pages, document cameras, and laptop computers in their curriculum. The school is developing a well-defined plan to integrate technology throughout the building.

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 found evidence that Morgan High School is making progress toward developing school-wide and classroom assessments based on clearly articulated expectations for student achievement. Some departments are meeting to discuss formative assessments. With the implementation of the Utah Core, departments are beginning to work toward school-wide assessments. The Visiting Team commends the Morgan School District Board of Education for providing staff development time to begin implementation of the PLC model.

Teachers use a variety of assessments. In co-taught classes, special education teachers work with content teachers to develop assessments that support the learning needs of their students while still addressing the content objectives. Developing classroom and school-wide assessments needs to be a continual effort.

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

Morgan High's accreditation report provides much evidence that the assessment process is fair and equitable for all students. The school shares data from standardized tests, and underachieving students are identified for additional support. Counselors evaluate student transcripts and meet with students and parents annually to make sure students are progressing toward graduation.

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

It is evident to the Visiting Team that Morgan High School shares data from standardized tests with the professional staff. The faculty uses the data to individualize instruction for each student.

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 faculty is provided with opportunities for collaboration on designated professional development days. The faculty informally collaborates within departments to discuss assessment methods and conduct data analysis. The school is encouraged to formalize a collaborative process that facilitates the development of assessment strategies.

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

Morgan High School is advised to develop a school-wide rubric to measure progress toward the DRSLs. The school should also develop a plan for how and when the rubric will be used, and how to quantify and interpret the results.

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 administrators and leadership team at Morgan High have established an academic learning climate that supports student learning. Programs that challenge both the more advanced and the lower-level students have been implemented to better ensure the learning of all. The AP program has grown both in the number of students enrolled and in the number of students who pass the exams. The school also promotes concurrent classes with Weber State and Utah State Universities.

Morgan High School has implemented an advisory period to promote a more personalized learning environment where all students are well known by at least one adult. This structure is also utilized for monitoring and supporting students' academic progress.

The school is in the process of implementing a new bell schedule to provide teachers with time to collaborate on curriculum and instruction. Teachers have many opportunities to hone their pedagogical skills through professional development in literacy and assessment strategies. Teachers report that the administration fosters a culture that maintains a positive learning environment and honors their work in the classroom.

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?*

Morgan High School has created a collaborative, data-driven, and research-based leadership framework. Administrators, department chairs, Community Council and PTSA representatives regularly review and discuss student achievement data. They use that information to help them make informed decisions about instruction and curriculum. Research-based practices were reviewed by all stakeholders, and adjustments were made to the schedule to include advisory classes. The school is reflectively adjusting programs to improve them to better meet the needs of students.

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?*

Morgan High School's policies and procedures are in line with the school's educational agenda. Leadership and departmental teams skillfully manage resources to help students accomplish the DRSLs. Improving student learning is a major focus of the school. All stakeholders have worked together to establish a safe, caring environment where students feel valued and supported in their 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 administrators at Morgan High School have developed a meaningful working relationship with their community. The School Community Council is composed of business partners, community members, and parents. They report that they feel fully included in the decision-making processes at the school. Students are also empowered to initiate school change. The community has formed a scholarship committee that works in partnership with the school to provide scholarships for Morgan High School students. Overall, comments from parents, students, staff, and the administrators indicate that Morgan High School encourages all members of the school community to participate in the decision-making processes.

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?*

Morgan High School has created a nurturing climate among staff, parents, and students. The teachers regularly speak with parents and have a strong educational partnership with families. Teachers have formed strong relationships with students and closely monitor their academic progress. Teachers and administrators are attentive to students' needs through the advisory program and find time to connect with individual students during the school day.

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?*

The Visiting Team found evidence that Morgan High School used *Collaborating for Student Achievement* provided by the Utah State Office of Education in its self-study process. The focus groups used the NSSE rubrics, and the departmental analyses were completing by using the essential questions. The school has a structure in place to review and revise the process on an ongoing basis.

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?*

Morgan High School takes advantage of professional development days to train teachers in the skills they will need to help students accomplish the DRSLs. The Visiting Team found evidence that the staff has aligned professional development with literacy and numeracy goals, and that they are committed to ongoing improvement.

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?*

Morgan High School's action plan was developed as a guide for school improvement. It contains action steps toward improving literacy, numeracy and citizenship skills.

The Visiting Team suggests that the action plan be revised to be more student-centered with specific proficiency levels outlined. Goals should be focused on measurable student outcomes.

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

Morgan High School has organized a leadership team to support change and continuous improvement. The district leaders and school administration work with the faculty, counselors, staff, and community, and have created a culture of continuous improvement.

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

Through the self-study process, the action plan was revised by the school leadership team. The new plan was presented at faculty meeting for review, discussion and approval.

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

Since the last full visit in 2006, Morgan High School has addressed the recommendations of the Visiting Team. With input from parents and students, the faculty revised the mission and belief statements. The school has increased the number of concurrent enrollment classes and developed a professional development plan. The school has also revisited the DRSLs to reduce them to a more manageable number.

CHAPTER 5: COMMUNITY BUILDING

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

The Visiting Team noted a strong sense of community among the students, parents, faculty/staff, and administration during the visit. It is evident that Morgan High School fosters congenial working relationships with the community. Parents feel valued and are warmly welcomed to participate in school activities. The entire community, many of whom are Morgan alumni, turns out in support of athletic and extracurricular programs.

The Visiting Team observed that the PTA and Community Council are meaningfully involved in the school. The Community Council reported that its members are included in the decision-making process and feel that their ideas and recommendations are of value.

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

Morgan High School collaborates with the community through the PTA and Community Council. Students expand their learning through work-based learning opportunities in the surrounding communities. The school utilizes its web site to communicate with families about coursework, college applications, school events, and other information. The school also has close partnerships with Utah State and Utah Valley Universities.

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

Morgan High School engaged the community in its self-study process. The school heard the voices of students and parents during the revision of the mission, beliefs, and DRSLs. The Community Council played a part in the development of the action plan. Further parent input came through the ISQ survey.

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

Morgan High School uses data from standardized tests to identify needs and to document school improvement efforts. That data is shared with the stakeholders in PTA and Community Council meetings. The school also shares information with the stakeholders through the school website, school newsletters, SEOPs, and parent-teacher conferences. Some teachers have individual web sites and blogs to communicate class information to students and parents.

CHAPTER 6: MAJOR COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Commendations:

- Morgan High School is to be commended for the excellent education it provides for students. All stakeholders report that they are pleased with the high quality of instruction and curriculum available at the school. Parents believe their children graduate with the knowledge and skills to be successful at the next level.

- The Visiting Team commends Morgan High School for creating a culture where students throughout the district come together and forge a cohesive student body. Students feel safe, cared for, and accepted by their teachers and peers.

- Morgan High School is to be commended for developing strong, beneficial relationships with parents, community, and business partners. It is obvious that

Morgan High School is a center of community interest. The school enjoys great support at all extracurricular activities. Residents, parents, and students are proud of the fine traditions of excellence at the school.

- The Visiting Team commends the school administrators for creating a warm rapport with all stakeholders. Parents feel welcome to express their views and know their opinions are appreciated. Students believe their administrators know them personally and care about them.

- Teachers are commended for their fine collegial relationships as they plan and prepare lessons for their students. Informal collaboration is evident as teachers work together on behalf of students.

- The Visiting Team commends the school for expanding technology resources since the previous accreditation. A large number of computers have been added and made available for student use. Other technologies such Smart Boards, document cameras, and projectors have been added to some classrooms.

Recommendations:

- The Visiting Team recommends that the school develop a strategic and systematic professional development plan that enables teachers to explicitly teach and measure student progress toward the DRSLs. Teachers will benefit from training on structured collaboration to disaggregate and interpret achievement data.

- The Visiting Team encourages the school to select a research-based model for professional learning communities. PLCs will allow teachers to work together to align instruction, create common assessments, and collect achievement data. The data will indicate which students need further support to achieve at high levels, thus guiding instructional and curricular decisions.

- The Visiting Team recommends that the school continue to review and revise the action plan as the school continues its improvement process. Goals should be specific, measurable, achievable, results-driven, and time-bound. Action steps should focus on student achievement outcomes.

- The school is encouraged to find financial resources to provide current technology for student learning throughout the school. Electronic devices can expand learning opportunities, enrich the classroom, and connect students with the world in which they live.