

**The Report of the
Accreditation Visiting Team**

**New Haven RTC School
2172 East 7200 South
Spanish Fork, Utah 84660**

April 20, 2012



**Utah State Office of Education
250 East 500 South
P.O. Box 144200
Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-4200**

New Haven RTC School

**2172 East 7200 South
Spanish Fork, Utah 84660**

April 20, 2012

UTAH STATE OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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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 20, 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 New Haven RTC 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 James Young is also commended.

The staff and administration are congratulated for their desire for excellence at New Haven RTC 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 New Haven RTC School.

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State Superintendent
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*Board of Regents Appointments

*** CMAC Representative Appointment

*****Charter School Representative Appointment

**UCAT Representative

****USBA Advisory Representative Appointment

NEW HAVEN RTC SCHOOL

OWNERSHIP

Owner of Record.....Innerchange, Inc.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

James Stewart..... Executive Director
Bill Bunn, M.D. Member
Megan Slater, R.N..... Member

NEW HAVEN RTC SCHOOL

ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF

School Administration

James Young..... Principal
Laurie Laird Education Director
Christie Valentine Academic Coordinator

Counseling/Therapy Staff

Rick Bessinger, PhD.	Brad Rentfro	Karolee Koller
Jannette Davenport	Dayna Buxton	R. Collingsworth
Nevin Alderman	Danna Olinick	Emma Hanks
Greg Burnham	Kevin Randall	Monica Bluime
A. Rencher	Matt Barlow	

Support Staff

Kim Zebly	Jennifer Peterson	Laura Holman
Andrew Boren	Debbi Johnson	Lindsey Keif
Lyle Durland	Mark Levie	

Faculty

Kendra Jacobsen	Larissa Taylor
Stacy Johnson	Alicia Waters

VISITING TEAM REPORT

NEW HAVEN RTC SCHOOL

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of New Haven School is to build a challenging learning environment that facilitates life-long learners who exemplify responsible citizens and are prepared to meet life's challenges.

BELIEF STATEMENTS

- All students can learn.
- Students learn in different ways and should be provided with a variety of instructional approaches to support their learning.
- Exceptional students require special services and resources.
- The commitment to continuous improvement is imperative if our school is going to enable students to become confident, self-directed, life-long learners.
- Curriculum and instructional practices should incorporate a variety of learning activities to accommodate different learning styles.

DESIRED RESULTS FOR STUDENT LEARNING (DRSLs)

1. Character and civic responsibility
2. Thinking and reasoning
3. Communication (special focus on writing)

Date of visit: April 20, 2012

MEMBERS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Robert Stillwell, Northwest Accreditation Commission and USOE Accreditation
Consultant, Visiting Team Chairperson

Jonathan Jones, Discovery Academy, Principal Emeritus

VISITING TEAM REPORT

NEW HAVEN RTC SCHOOL

CHAPTER 1: SCHOOL PROFILE

New Haven School serves adolescent girls ages 13-17 as part of New Haven Residential Treatment Center, with campuses in Spanish Fork and Saratoga Springs, UT. Currently the girls come from 23 states and three countries. The students progress through a six-tier leveled system. They attend school five hours per day, Monday through Friday, year-round.

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

New Haven School demonstrated, through surveys and questions related to former schooling experience, that most students have a negative attitude toward school. The school provided clear evidence that the school-wide writing assignments and scoring rubrics have significantly improved student performance in writing.

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

The school has identified that more time and resources need to be allocated to math instruction to increase student performance in that vital curricular area.

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

The degree of participation by school staff in preparation for the 2012 self-study was high. Many strengths and limitations were identified, and there seems to be ample teamwork and commitment to move the school forward toward its school improvement goals.

Suggested Areas for Further Inquiry:

See the recommendations section below.

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 faculty members reviewed the mission and belief statements of the school and, following discussion, concluded that the original mission statement better suited their efforts as teachers and as a school than did the statements created for initial accreditation. Each member of the faculty was involved individually and collectively in arriving at this conclusion. The school's educational team likewise implemented and has reviewed three DRSLs. Implementation and institutionalization of the three DRSLs has been accomplished through surveys in order to rank students in relation to success in college and the workforce. Further assessment was based on the administration of the Weschler Individual Achievement Test in order to ascertain areas of concern. Staff training in the effective use of rubrics in assessing student achievement in the DRSLs was followed by the development of school-wide scoring tools, including adoption of the Step Up to Writing system. Further training focused on the implementation of activities and instruction and the specific assessment of student progress toward achieving the DRSLs based on rubric scores and WIAT testing data.

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

The school has collaboratively focused on aligning the mission and beliefs with the stated DRSLs. The focus is on the maintaining a challenging learning environment, achieving lifelong learning and responsible citizenship, and meeting challenges. The emphasis is on full support of this focus by all stakeholders, including the administration, teachers, students, families, and the school's ownership.

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

The assessment of progress in the institutionalizing of the DRSLs is being accomplished by means of in-service training and provision of resources for use in the content areas; by the development of a rubric to match goals and objectives to student achievement; by the use of content writing activities incorporated in written lesson plans; and by the support of data derived from assessments in student work with rubrics, WIAT scores, and SAT scores. Data indicates improvement in student achievement in relation to DRSLs.

- 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 school's mission and beliefs emphasize the building of a challenging learning environment, facilitating life-long learners, and the development of responsible citizens. The three DRSLs and their objectives incorporate the underlying "ingredients" involved in the realization of the mission and beliefs. The emphasis on Character and Civic Responsibility, Effective Communication, and Thinking and Reasoning, with the accompanying objectives, provides the foundation for fulfillment of the mission of the school. With these emphases integrated throughout the program, the school's climate is evidence of a high degree of success.

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?*

A focus group dealt specifically with the issue of curriculum development. This was a collaborative assessment that recognized the alignment between the Utah State Core Curriculum and Utah Life Skill and individual course curricula. The findings of the focus group concluded that the curriculum in the school is closely aligned with the defined standards, including selection of essential knowledge and skills within the curriculum with the use of a variety of teaching strategies, recognition of different learning styles, and differentiated approaches to meeting individual student needs. There is clear evidence of a collaborative approach in curriculum review, assessment, and revision as necessary.

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

Inquiry, problem-solving, and higher-order thinking are essential ingredients in the school's Thinking and Reasoning DRSL. The school makes focused effort on the incorporation of teaching strategies that are geared toward the achievement of that DRSL on the part of every student; thus, the emphasis on awareness and use of diverse teaching strategies that deal with varying learning styles and needs of students.

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

Curriculum development is a collaborative endeavor involving both administration and faculty. In-service and faculty meetings focus on curriculum and teaching strategies. A focus group report indicates that collaborative effort is effective in both the selection of curricular materials and the discarding of out-of-date materials.

Teachers inspect and review materials, including materials used in other institutions, and evaluate them in relation to the needs of New Haven students.

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

Curriculum review includes assessment of student outcomes in relation to effectiveness of materials and strategies in use. With the focus on student success, data derived from the assessment of student work and scores from standardized testing are used in making curriculum decisions. Balance is achieved in correlating student learning outcomes with curriculum and teaching strategies, determining areas of strengths and weakness.

Instruction:

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

Teachers strive to actively engage students in the learning process. A variety of strategies are used to meet the needs of different learning styles and teach to the strengths of student abilities. In addition to the role of reading, direct teaching, and written work, teachers also use technology, kinesthetic activities, and a variety of visual aids. The goal is working toward meeting the expectations for student learning.

- 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 has incorporated and institutionalized the stated DRSLs as forming the core of the instructional program. Lesson planning and the use of a variety of teaching and learning strategies are aligned with achieving the objectives of the DRSLs.

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

Faculty meetings and in-service include collaborative problem solving regarding instructional needs and appropriate strategies for meeting those needs. There is a climate in the school of encouraging improvement in instructional strategies in relation to meeting student learning needs. The school recognizes the need to emphasize depth of coverage in content areas, challenging assignments, frequent use of assessments, development of study skills, and the use of assessments in the classroom.

- 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?*

Each teacher is licensed and endorsed in the areas in which he/she teaches. Furthermore, in-service opportunities focus on approaches and practices in instruction as related to teachers' own areas of expertise and instruction.

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

The school is committed to further development of its technological resources. Computers and technology are incorporated in the classroom, and in research-based assignments and reports. As a residential treatment center, computer use requires strict supervision and monitoring.

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 staff has collaboratively developed a rubric approach to provide classroom and school-wide assessments of student learning and performance. Also, rubrics have been used by focus groups to assess the areas of Curriculum Development, Quality Instructional Design, Quality Assessment Systems, Leadership for School Improvement, Culture of Continuous Improvement and Learning, Educational Agenda – Shared Vision, Beliefs, Mission and Goals, and Community Building. The result is a multi-faceted approach to assessment of the total school program which, in turn, is focused on 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?*

Assessment tools include the use of the school's grading system for student work, including the rubrics that have been developed for this purpose. In addition is the use of the data supplied by the standardized testing. Combining the gathered information provides the basis for identifying strengths and weaknesses in individual areas, as well as school-wide. These measures are used in an equitable approach to assessing and evaluating individual progress in achieving academic expectations.

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

Data obtained from the various assessment sources provides the basis for the faculty and administration to assess and evaluate successful progress toward the realization of academic expectations. The presentation of data currently obtained shows extensive understanding and use of the information in both decision-making and assessment of success.

- 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?*

Both in-service and faculty meetings provide the means for faculty collaboration to determine a broad range of assessment strategies. The "report card" that provides information regarding the cumulative evidence of student achievement is the result of the use of a wide variety of rubrics and guidelines for assessments and evaluations across the curriculum. The underlying standards are collaboratively agreed upon, and the means of assessment are collaboratively shared.

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

The teachers developed writing rubrics that are used school-wide. The school has decided that Step Up to Writing best suits the needs of its students. The school showed clear evidence that the Communication DRSL, as it relates to writing across the curriculum, has been institutionalized.

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?*

As the academic leader of the school, the Education Director provides direct influence regarding goals and expectations as a part of a shared or collaborative approach to the development and support of teaching and learning. The Education Director is clearly recognized as the leader in the team effort of verbalizing and implementing the principles as stated in the school's mission and beliefs.

- 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's self-study report gives clear indications of a data-driven, research-based monitoring of student achievement. This is reflective of both of the expectations of the leadership and the buy-in of the professional staff. The data provided give the means of assessment of student achievement.

- 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?*

The Executive Director, in concert with the Education Director, provides sound business practices that in turn support the organization and allocation of resources for the operation of the school. The evidence shows that the school operates on a sound financial footing that supports the accomplishment of the school's mission, beliefs, and educational goals and objectives.

- 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?*

There is ample evidence that the entire school community (faculty, staff, therapists, and students) is encouraged and involved in commitment to the school and its mission, in participation and collaboration in the development and implementation of curriculum and strategies, and in a direct and shared responsibility for student learning and achievement. This is a direct result of the leadership by example provided by the Education Director.

- 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 students tend to develop a positive rapport/working relationship with their teachers who serve as mentors, as well as "listening ears." As a residential treatment center, New Haven provides each student with a therapist who works directly on the therapeutic needs of that student, which have a direct correlation to the student's education/learning needs. Teachers, administrators, and therapists for the therapeutic team that monitor, assess, and evaluate student progress and achievement not only academically, but therapeutically. The school has a close-knit, hands-on approach and relationship with each student.

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 2012 self-study documented the process and the results of following the USOE plan for school improvement. Mission, beliefs and DRSLs were revisited and are in alignment with school practices.

- 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 Visiting Team has a recommendation regarding professional development time for teacher collaboration. The teachers made a coordinated effort to reach school-wide agreements for 2012 self-study. More time is need for teachers to reach agreements on improving the math curriculum, instructional strategies and assessments.

- 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 action plans pertaining to each of its three DRSLs. The action plan for Communication contains the goals and action steps necessary to improve math skills.

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

The school makes changes to survive in a free market. The school leadership has the authority to work with the faculty to improve.

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

Through uses of school-wide rubrics to assess writing, a large section of the Communication DRSL has been institutionalized.

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

The library has been improved and increased. In 2009 a separate school house was constructed on the Spanish Fork campus. A special education teacher has been added to the staff.

CHAPTER 5: COMMUNITY BUILDING

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

There is great teamwork among the staff for integration of therapeutic and education programs.

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

The school extends opportunities for students with college courses and independent study.

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

The faculty participated in and had much input into the 2012 self-study.

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

The results are shared with the whole New Haven team as well as parents, and are used in marketing the program to potential new students and parents.

CHAPTER 6: MAJOR COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Commendations:

- The Visiting Team commends New Haven School for the high level of direct instruction delivered by teachers.
- The Visiting Team commends New Haven School for the well designed, well maintained facilities, and for providing an environment that is conducive to student learning.
- The Visiting Team commends New Haven School for the quality of the 2012 self-study. The data in the school profile is pertinent and includes analysis. The Visiting Team notes the participation and teamwork of teachers in preparing the self-study.
- The Visiting Team commends New Haven School for the educational leadership of Laurie Laird.

Recommendations:

- The Visiting Team recommends that New Haven School find ways to increase teacher collaboration time.
- The Visiting Team recommends that New Haven School increase the presence of technology in the classrooms and train teachers in its effective use.
- The Visiting Team recommends that New Haven School train teachers in new strategies for teaching mathematics.