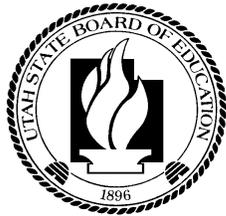


**The Report of the
Accreditation Visiting Team**

**North Sevier High School
350 West 400 North
Salina, Utah 84654**

March 15, 2012



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Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-4200**

North Sevier High School
350 West 400 North
Salina, Utah 84654

March 15, 2012

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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 15, 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 North Sevier 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 Jill Porter is also commended.

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

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*****Charter School Representative Appointment

**UCAT Representative

****USBA Advisory Representative Appointment

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George Chappell Assistant Principal

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NORTH SEVIER HIGH SCHOOL

MISSION STATEMENT

The Mission of North Sevier High School is to provide every student the opportunity to acquire the knowledge, skills and habits to become responsible contributors to society.

BELIEF STATEMENTS

- The ultimate aim of schooling is to help each individual progress toward reaching his/her full potential.
- Students and teachers are human beings with value.
- Learning is the chief priority.
- Our success as a school requires involvement of parents and other community members.
- A school environment accepting of change and looking forward to the future is essential for success.
- “Teachers as facilitators, students as workers.”
- Our school must be safe be organized to meet the needs of individuals by being flexible, adaptable, and inclusive.
- School must be a safe environment that promotes student responsibility for directing and assessing individual learning.
- Students need to learn and apply critical thinking skills.

DESIRED RESULTS FOR STUDENT LEARNING (DRSLs)

1. Critical Thinking Skills
2. Physical, Emotional and Social Well Being
3. Effective Communication

Date of visit: March 15, 2012

MEMBERS OF THE VISITING TEAM

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

Todd Dawson, Snow Canyon Middle School, Washington School District

Chuck Brandt, Canyon View high School, Iron School District

VISITING TEAM REPORT
NORTH SEVIER HIGH SCHOOL

CHAPTER 1: SCHOOL PROFILE

North Sevier High School is a small, rural school located in Salina. Although agrarian in the beginning, the three small communities that contribute students to North Sevier High School have evolved into primarily blue-collar areas, with mining and trucking as the main industries. The school serves students in grades 9-12 and has an enrollment of 262.

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

The school faculty has developed DRSL rubrics, and is now working on coming to a school-wide agreement on the timing and frequency of using the rubrics as school-wide assessments.

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

The school profile provides an abundance of data. The Visiting Team communicated to the faculty that there is room for improvement in terms of the in-depth analysis of data.

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

The self-study is sound evidence of a very thorough process for improving student learning in the school. The school has done a tremendous amount of quality work to prepare for the accreditation visit, and their processes are in place and ongoing so that they can take the steps needed to implement the action plans in their school improvement plan.

Suggested Areas for Further Inquiry:

- See the recommendations section below.

CHAPTER 2: NORTHWEST ASSOCIATION OF ACCREDITED SCHOOLS (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 school went through a two-year process of refining and reexamining its purpose and practices, involving parents and students in its focus groups. The school's DRSLs are a good fit for its students and teachers.

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

The alignment is clearly evident. It was confirmed in the self-study and validated by the Full-Team Visit.

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

Sevier High has developed DRSL Rubrics for Critical Thinking and Oral Communication. These identify skills as indicators and measure three levels of performance.

- 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 faculty, parents on the Community Council, and students involved in focus groups know and have embraced the accreditation process. They have a clear purpose, and their mission, beliefs, and DRSLs are reinforced throughout the school.

Curriculum:

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

It was clearly evident that the curriculum is aligned to Utah Core Curriculum and that much of the Life Skills program has been implemented.

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

The Visiting Team determined the curriculum to be highly engaging and based on inquiry, problem solving, and critical thinking. The team was impressed with the way students were actively involved in the curriculum; most classrooms visited had students interacting with the curriculum through small group discussions, cooperative learning, projects, class discussions, oral reports, use of technology, etc. In addition, remediation with teachers, intervention after school. The Wednesday evening tutoring, EDNET classes, and Advanced Placement classes are provided to address the learning needs of a diverse student population.

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

There is strong evidence that some teachers are meeting together to address curriculum development, improved instruction, and other issues affecting the school.

The Visiting Team suggests that the school explore opportunities that will help ensure the successful development and implementation of school-wide assessments that will measure student progress on the DRSL indicators.

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

Through interviews with staff members and classroom observations, the Visiting Team found that the school uses the *NWEA* to review and use as a guide on what needs to be re-taught. For students who really are struggling, the school has implemented After Practice tutoring sessions twice a week.

The Visiting Team suggests that the school explore the use of common assessments in all content areas.

Instruction:

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

The teachers are very adept at varying strategies to meet learner needs. This is evident both in the direct teaching and in assessments.

- b) *To what extent have the school and the staff developed strategies for instruction that build the capacity for explicitly teaching the identified DRSL in every classroom?*

The school has closely linked the Critical Thinking and Effective Communicator DRSLs so that some of the explicit skills taught are common to both DRSLs. Examples of this are identifying problems, making connections, developing perspective, presenting evidence, identifying solutions and effectively communicating solutions.

- 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?*

Teachers are given time to collaborate. When appropriate, they are allowed to attend conferences. There was much time invested in the agreements necessary to revisit the mission, beliefs and DRSLs and to have the staff gain a better understanding of the accreditation process. One of the next steps for professional development is to give the teachers the time to decide how and how often the DRSL rubrics will be used school-wide.

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

The teachers are proficient and very attentive to keeping their lessons aligned with the core and common core curricula. They make decisions based on their informal classroom assessments.

- 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 has a plan for acquiring new technologies for the classroom.

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?*

Two DRSL rubrics have been developed. The process for administering the rubrics is currently under development.

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

Presently, the teachers have clear evidence of student learning through class perspective. The DRSL rubrics will allow them to capture data on the bigger school-wide picture. The skills listed as indicators for the rubrics should give clear results.

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

Presently, the teachers are using their informal assessments on a regular basis. In the near future they will have a better means of looking at the school's progress on DRSLs.

- 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?*

There is good collaboration within departments. There could be better collaboration between departments if more time is allocated to this task.

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

There is full agreement that the tools will be DRSL rubrics. The next step is to reach an agreement on the use and frequency of use of the rubrics.

CHAPTER 3: NORTHWEST SUPPORT STANDARDS

Leadership and Organization:

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

The school leadership has created an academic climate that supports teaching and learning. The leadership team meets monthly and discusses academic and social needs in the school. This team works to support the learning climate in the school by supporting teachers and students in their roles, by providing time and support for department improvement through data collection and analysis, and by setting high expectations for instruction 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?*

The leadership team employs effective decision making that is very collaborative and is rooted in educational best practices. While data drives the decisions of the leadership team, the analysis of the data should improve as it relates to instructional effectiveness in the classroom. The leadership team understands and uses data as it relates to the whole school program. Discussions with teachers related to individual classrooms should be centered more frequently on student learning data.

- 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 school leadership effectively provides skillful stewardship by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and allocation and use of resources. Such stewardship on the part of the principal, athletic director and counselor leads to a safe environment and a school atmosphere that promotes learning. The feedback from students, parents, and staff members reflects that such leadership is effective in successfully leading the school in its improvement efforts.

- 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 collaborative atmosphere created by school leadership empowers the school community in its involvement in the school community and in the decision-making process. The level of commitment, participation, and shared responsibility for student learning is high. Stakeholders feel empowered to make a positive impact on the school.

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

North Sevier High School has established a monthly Advisory group to assist students in meeting the school-wide expectations for learning. This Advisory is set up so as to allow each student to have individual contact with a caring

adult in order for each student to feel supported in his/her academic and social goals and personal development.

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 recognizes that North Sevier High School is in the process of defining and implementing a comprehensive school improvement plan. The Visiting Team would suggest that administrators, the school leadership team, and faculty members use the data that they have collected to drive the improvement plan at the classroom level.

- 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 has implemented professional development experiences to frame the conversations in addressing the school's needs as outlined in the action plan. The school administration implemented time for teacher collaboration in weekly meetings and encourages staff members to collaborate outside of the school at the district level.

- 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 Visiting Team found the action plan to be adequate in addressing the critical areas suggested for follow-up. The school staff members, administrators, and members of the School Community Council indicated a high level of support and commitment to the implementation of the action plan. The Visiting Team is confident that North Sevier High School will be successful in its school improvement efforts.

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

North Sevier has developed a culture of open communication among the faculty, staff, administration and community members, and all stakeholders support productive change and continuous improvement.

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

The Visiting Team recognizes that there have been significant changes in the administration since the last visit. It appears that the school leadership team did not meet regularly until the current administration began. Mrs. Porter has made significant progress over the past four years in implementing and revising the action plan.

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

The North Sevier High administration has done an exceptional job of collecting and providing more useful data that is being used to drive decision making. The school is utilizing department and faculty meetings to collaborate and beginning to collaborate between departments.

Involvement from the Community Council is exceptional. The Visiting Team commends the school for having such a strong Community Council.

CHAPTER 5: COMMUNITY BUILDING

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

The school fosters community building and working relationships within the school through collaboration, mutual respect, and trust. Those who work at North Sevier High School see the best in kids and work together to support one another in the roles they fill. Teachers and staff communicate effectively, trust and support each other, and seek to collaborate in meaningful ways. The Community Council speaks highly of the work being done at North Sevier High School.

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

The school has a supportive Community Council that meets regularly to help identify ways to improve the school and support student learning and achievement. This is one example of a collaborative network in place. The school faculty and staff also collaborate from time to time with faculty and staff members from neighboring schools and districts. This collaboration helps North Sevier High School in its mission to provide opportunities to each student. Teachers learn and share instructional practices and ideas.

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

The school community has been effectively engaged in the self-study process on behalf of students. The self-study process has led to an accurate picture of where the school is in its improvement efforts.

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

The results of school improvement have been shared with stakeholders through the self-study process, focus group participation, and Community Council meetings. The student achievement data is documented in the self-study and is accessible to the school community in general. It is recommended that the plan for communicating future progress toward meeting the goals stated in the action plan be communicated to all stakeholders.

CHAPTER 6: MAJOR COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Commendations:

- The Visiting Team commends North Sevier High School for embracing the accreditation process and for investing the time to bring about positive change at the school.

- The Visiting Team commends North Sevier High School for including the Community Council and students in focus groups and enlisting their help in revisiting the mission, beliefs and desired results for student learning
- The Visiting Team commends North Sevier High School teachers for using a wide range of instructional strategies to meet the needs of their students.
- The Visiting Team commends North Sevier High School for the educational leadership of Jill Porter.

Recommendations:

- The Visiting Team recommends that North Sevier High School implement desired results for student learning rubrics. It is recommended that these focus on the Critical Thinking DRSL in order to fully institutionalize it, so that the school can take what it learns and apply it to implementing the other DRSLs.
- The Visiting Team recommends that North Sevier High School continue to find ways to use assessment data to improve instruction. Significant progress has been made on collecting and reporting data. A next step would be to further reflect on the data that is most useful. Presently there is an imbalance between the quantity of the data and the quality of the analysis.