

**The Report of the  
Accreditation Visiting Team**

**Northridge High School  
2430 North Hillfield Road  
Layton, Utah 84041**

**February 18-19, 2009**



**Utah State Office of Education  
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**THE REPORT OF THE  
VISITING TEAM REVIEWING**

**Northridge High School  
2430 North Hillfield Road  
Layton, UT 84041**

**February 18-19, 2009**

**UTAH STATE OFFICE OF EDUCATION**

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State Superintendent of Public Instruction**

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## **FOREWORD**

The major purpose of the accreditation process is to stimulate school growth and improvement so as to increase 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. It is a three-phased 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, February 18-19, 2009, 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 Northridge 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 Dr. Steven A. Hill, Principal, is also commended.

The staff and administration are congratulated for their desire for excellence at Northridge High School, and also for the professional attitude of all members of the group, which made it possible for them to see areas of weakness and strength and to suggest procedures for bringing about 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 even more 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 Northridge High School.

Patti Harrington, Ed.D.  
State Superintendent  
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Clyde Jackson ..... Assistant Principal  
Gregory Wilkey ..... Assistant Principal  
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Angela Woiwode  
Ruth Ann Yahne

# **NORTHRIDGE HIGH SCHOOL**

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

Northridge High School will provide all students with rigorous, relevant, educational opportunities that will enable each individual to reach their potential and be responsible, productive citizens.

## **BELIEF STATEMENTS**

- We respect diverse talents.
- We foster approaches that focus on learning rather than teaching
- We recognize and promote new learning styles.
- We continually assess and provide prompt feedback
- We promote active learning.
- We know school improvement belongs equally, to all of us.
- We have the highest of expectations
- We initiate communication between students, parents, staff and community
- Relationships are at the core of all we do.
- We will focus on results.

## **DESIRED RESULTS FOR STUDENT LEARNING (DRSLs)**

1. An Effective Communicator
  - Selects, plans, and organizes ideas to communicate.
  - Students use oral, written, and mathematical forms of expression to effectively gather, develop, analyze, and communicate ideas.
  - Communicates with clarity, purpose, and understanding of audience.
  - Students seek information by actively listening, responding appropriately, and acknowledging the ideas of others.

2. A Collaborative and Respectful Student
  - Students will demonstrate the ability to work collaboratively in diverse groups, listen to one another respectfully, respect one another's personal space, work toward common goals and consider various points of view.
  - Students contribute to the class, school, and community by showing respect for diversity and working collaboratively to achieve goals.
  - Students demonstrate values such as trust, respect, responsibility, integrity, and citizenship.
  - Students demonstrate accountability for their attendance, behavior, and interactions with others.
  
3. Math Skills/Problem Solver
  - Students scoring proficient on the CRT math test will increase annually. Additionally, students will be able to pass the math sub section of the UBSCT test prior to graduation.
  - Students employ a large variety of strategies including thinking and logical reasoning to solve problems.
  - Students use multiple resources to form and test hypotheses, analyze results, and make valid conclusions.

Date of visit: February 18-19, 2009

## **MEMBERS OF THE VISITING TEAM**

Douglas Finch, Cascade Elementary School, Alpine School District, Visiting Team  
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## VISITING TEAM REPORT

### NORTHRIDGE HIGH SCHOOL

#### CHAPTER 1: SCHOOL PROFILE

Northridge High School opened its doors in the fall of 1992. The school is located in Layton, which has a current population of approximately 70,000. The community demographics are currently 91 percent Caucasian, four percent Hispanic, two percent Asian, two percent Pacific Islander, one percent African-American, .5 percent Native American, and .5 percent other. The median household income is \$45,569 per year.

The school's current student body is 2,064 in grades 10-12. Students live in the communities of Layton, Sunset, Clinton, South Weber, and Hill Air Force Base. Students attend eight classes on a 90-minute block schedule, with four classes each day. The block schedule has been modified to provide time for student support programs (tutorial, advisory), and for teachers to collaborate professionally and meet during extended lunchtime on Friday. Northridge also utilizes a late start nine mornings throughout the school year for professional development. The school has been recognized for its work in small learning communities for developing an academy program. School-wide improvement efforts have focused on three major areas: literacy, numeracy, and group skills.

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

There has been a relatively significant increase (four percent) in the Hispanic student population over the past three years. Historically, there is a tendency for minority and ELL students to score considerably lower than most other subgroups on performance assessments.

There is a noticeable trend toward lower enrollment in advanced placement (AP) programs and an increased participation in concurrent enrollment.

Graduation and attendance rates have increased to notably high levels (95 percent and 98 percent, respectively).

Student mobility fluctuates between 12 and 15 percent per year. Some of this transience is due the nature of military assignments at Hill Air Force Base.

Student performance on algebra, geometry, and chemistry end-of-course tests, as well as math computation scores on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills, are lower than state averages.

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

Some of the graphical displays of data were difficult to read, with generalized figures and charts void of exact numbers, or without total populations or trends considered.

Some of the data also seemed less meaningful to the identification or illustration of school profile or student performance (example: PNA/ISQ survey), or was missing school analysis to demonstrate relevance to the self-study.

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

The school profile demonstrated a concerted effort by the school to identify who is learning and who is not. The school's leadership presented this data to the PTA, School Community Council, focus groups, and departments to guide the instructional and organizational analysis. The majority of stakeholders are emerging in their skill and capacity to identify strengths and limitations based on school profile data.

#### **Suggested Areas for Further Inquiry:**

- Certain segments of the surveyed stakeholders reported contrasting perceptions of school climate from the general majority. Addressing these perceptions may support the school's efforts to meet the needs of more students.
- Academy enrollment and course-taking patterns by gender may reveal patterns of study or recruitment needs that may be helpful to consider.

## **CHAPTER 2: NORTHWEST ASSOCIATION OF ACCREDITED SCHOOLS (NAAS) 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?*

Since the last accreditation report, the school's mission statement, beliefs, and DRSLs have been reviewed, refined, and rewritten to be more succinct and measurable. All stakeholders have been involved in the revision process, either serving on a committee or as part of a class where discussions/teaching occurred. Community members not personally involved on the parent committees were informed of the findings through written mailings.

The school mission statement, beliefs, and DRSLs are visible throughout the school. Students at Northridge High School were aware of the DRSLs as a concept, but could not recite the exact DRSLs. However, more importantly, the Visiting Team did feel the DRSLs are a central focus of the curricular practice seen at Northridge High School. The Visiting Team recommends an introduction to the actual DRSLs at the beginning of each school year, and continuing curricular emphasis thereafter.

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

It is evident to the Visiting Team that all stakeholders have high expectations for the students at Northridge High School. Student learning is a key component of every part of the culture at Northridge. The mission statement, belief statements, and DRSLs are all aligned not only to incorporate these expectations inside the classroom setting, but also to provide an all-encompassing framework for life-long success and learning. Northridge High School stakeholders are to be commended for efforts made through this revision and alignment process.

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

Indicators have been developed to identify the school's progress in assessing each DRSL. Recently, staff members at Northridge were asked to compile a list of essential skills in each of their courses that align with the DRSLs. This information was used to draft rubrics for two of the three DRSLs (Effective Communication and Group Skills). The Visiting Team recommends that the school's administration, staff, and stakeholders create a rubric for the last DRSL (Numeracy); train staff members on rubric systems; and refine, implement, and evaluate all rubrics as part of the continual school improvement process.

- 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 mission statement, beliefs, and DRSLs play an important role in guiding policies and decisions of the school. The "Knights Code" is used as a memorable way of portraying student and staff expectations. The "group skills" and "holistic student" concepts are especially prominent throughout the culture of Northridge High School. The Visiting Team recommends that the staff members use available resources, including time, to utilize data collected to assess individual student progress and needs, as well as implement and share best practices.

## 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 faculty and staff have worked within departments to ensure that the curriculum is clearly defined and taught. The departments meet on a regular basis, with many departments working on aligning their curricula vertically and creating common assessments. The departments follow the Utah Core Curriculum, and it is evident from the atmosphere of the classrooms that the Utah Life Skills have also been embedded into everyday lessons. It appears that the school uses its professional development time well, with late starts and small learning community meeting times.

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

The Visiting Team found some limited evidence of inquiry, problem-solving, and higher-order thinking skills. It is recommended that more varied teaching and instructional methods be used to meet the needs of **all** students. There appeared to be a great deal of lecture in many classes, and modified instruction for ELL and special education students was not in evidence. The Visiting Team recommends that teachers work to devise instructional practices that involve **all** students.

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

There is no question regarding the dedication and commitment of staff members to the education of the students at Northridge High School. The teachers meet regularly and are beginning to create lesson plans to work across the curriculum in their small learning communities. The staff members are beginning to embed the DRSLs explicitly into the curriculum. It is recommended that the staff continue to work on rubrics to measure their DRSLs so that teachers and students know what success in those DRSLs will look like.

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

In some content areas, assessment seems to be driving the curriculum to ensure success for all. It is apparent that many departments have caught the vision of creating common assessments; some departments are even involving teachers from other schools. The Visiting Team recommends that all content areas continue the process of creating assessments that can drive learning and ensure that all students reach the intended learning outcomes. State, district, and school data are clearly available. It is recommend that data continue to be shared with the staff and utilized in driving the

creation of curriculum to ensure that all students are meeting the intended learning outcomes.

**Instruction:**

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

Various instructional strategies are used in the school. From lecturing and book notes to classroom activities and experiments, it is obvious that teachers vary their teaching styles to enhance the learning. Project-based learning is evident throughout the school as teachers use various tools and ideas for their lessons. Teachers use audio and visual enhancements, as well as cross-curricular lessons, and the Visiting Team observed students collaborating with their peers in the classrooms. Communication between students and teachers was generally clear and understood. Technology observed included programs such as Text the Mob and Wikis.

This being said, the Visiting Team observed limited evidence of instructional strategies modified to meet the needs of ELL and special education students.

- 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 mission and DRSLs are displayed in the commons area, the office, and the classrooms. Although these learning goals are visibly evident, they are not universally used in all the classrooms. The Visiting Team recommends that the school continue to implement and use the DRSLs as an integral designing instructional strategy.

- 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 have the opportunity to attend various conferences, and sharing these opportunities among PLC groups gives more teachers the opportunity to develop professionally. When staff members return, they have the opportunity to share with other teachers, giving all the teachers the chance to learn. Technology use is evident at this school, and teachers are learning new tools to enhance student learning. PLC meetings allow teachers to discuss individual students and ways to approach difficulties.

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

Teachers at Northridge High School are proficient and highly qualified in their content areas. A growing number of teachers are ELL endorsed, and all teachers have been trained in sheltered education strategies. The Visiting Team identified the prevalence of connections and respect between teachers, students, and the community. Numerous teachers are working to adapt to the style of the students they teach and work with in their small learning communities. Students see cross-curricular relationships among their classes.

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

Technology is used throughout the school. Projectors have been recently installed in each classroom. The leadership team is devising plans for future technology, including Wikis, texting, etc. Northridge High School has several computer labs providing ample opportunity for integrating technology into student learning.

The Visiting Team commends Northridge High School for establishing and continuing a tradition of leading in instructional technology.

**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 observed Northridge High School faculty members attempting to clearly state assessment expectations and performance standards on individual class disclosures. Most assessments have been developed departmentally and are aligned with essential knowledge, skills, and performance standards. Some departments have created pre- and post-test assessments, and CRTs and competency exams are given at the ends of many levels.

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

A variety of assessment techniques are being used to assess student progress in achieving academic expectations. Besides traditional tests and quizzes, Northridge utilizes placement testing, oral presentations, portfolios, essay writing, peer assessment, mock interviews, and PowerPoint presentations as tools to demonstrate a student's progress in a course.

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

Analysis of data at Northridge High School is taking place primarily on a leadership level, with some analysis being done on a departmental basis. Teachers are collaborating effectively within departments and discussing assessment results and techniques used to increase student knowledge.

- 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?*

Professional development programs are designed to facilitate the acquisition of new knowledge and skills by all certified staff members. Northridge High faculty members report that they receive support from their administrators regarding professional development opportunities. Although new teaching techniques and ideas seem to be shared rather openly, the Visiting Team believes that more collaboration may be necessary in the development and utilization of quality assessment strategies.

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

There is no evidence to suggest that Northridge High has utilized a school-wide scoring tool to assess the identified DRSL. DRSLs are currently in draft form at Northridge, and the Visiting Team recommends that these rubrics be completed and staff training begun to implement and evaluate each of these rubrics as part of a continued school improvement process.

### **CHAPTER 3: NAAS 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 established a positive learning climate by incorporating small learning communities and a holistic approach to teaching and learning. Rather than viewing themselves solely as content teachers, educators realize students have personal as well as academic and developmental needs that they work collaboratively to address. The school is to be commended for adapting and adjusting the academy program to meet the needs of all students. This approach provides a meaningful guide for students in course selection and future educational and career decisions.

- 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 leadership has demonstrated a focus on data and best practices for the implementation and adjustment of school programs. After monitoring the number of student failures while utilizing a mandatory study hall, the administration abandoned the program in favor of tutorial and advisory. Community members and students reported that their concerns are seriously considered and affect decision making by school leadership.

- 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 Northridge High School administrations uses the guiding principles of clearly articulating expectations and building quality relationships based on respect to manage the school. A variety of committees and the use of embedded professional time for collaboration promote effective communication and teamwork. Survey and student referral data demonstrate confidence in the safety and security of the school.

- 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 school leadership distributes and shares responsibility in the decision-making process. The self-study process involved the entire school community, including parents, business leaders, and students. A high level of commitment exists, particularly among the School Community Council and PTA, due to the meaningful role these organizations have played in analyzing data, proposing solutions, and finding resources to accomplish improvement goals.

- 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?*

Meaningful connections between students and staff members are a critical component of Northridge High's student learning support efforts. The small learning communities designed around the Academy concept create a smaller school environment for students and common cohorts of students for teachers. Student advisory provides an additional opportunity for students to connect with teachers and emphasize and the Life Skills curriculum. Additional supports being explored by the leadership teams include sophomore orientation day and peer leadership.

### **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 NAAS, which requires specific responses regarding the physical plant, finances, audit of school records, advertising, etc.

## **CHAPTER 4: NAAS 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 Northridge High School administration feels that the self-study model rubric fits the faculty's naturally evolved process. The process of self-examination and use of assessment is what Northridge High School is about. The administrators feel they have developed a better action plan through this process than they had before. They have written a five-year action plan that has helped establish the goals to which they are committed. The model has created a focus on what is essential, and shows what they have done and what they want to do and giving the school a "road map" to follow. It gives the school the ability to articulate to others what Northridge High School is about. Grant requirements have also helped drive the improvement process. Data collection appears to be ongoing, and allows an examination of success in meeting established goals.

Teachers feel that the process has empowered them. Students, teachers and community now know more of what Northridge High School is about, what is expected, and how to support it. The programs are becoming embedded among the faculty, and rotating training is ongoing among the staff. Faculty members are sharing new knowledge and ideas with colleagues in Professional Learning Communities, and staff training is also occurring among teachers in the school through shared activities in Academies and small learning communities.

- 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?*

Teachers feel that, through the aligned and ongoing professional development plan, they are more prepared to determine collaboratively the skills that each student needs to learn. A determination to make connections between the classroom and real life is stated and related to the objectives, and has helped to build appropriate relationships with students. Professional development has allowed teachers to train themselves in how to help students build skills. Staff development activities are designed to help teachers work in effectively during advisory and the tutorial time. Part of the training has been developed over a one- to two-year plan to have teachers determine essential curricular components and develop assessments to determine whether students are “getting it.” The staff feels that this training has established sustainability and “buy in” of programs.

The administration feels that aligned and ongoing professional development has allowed the faculty members to openly examine curriculum delivery and monitor student progress. Focus groups are empowered to develop policies and strategies. It has created a more transparent policy between administration and faculty, a shared leadership and working collaborative model.

- 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?*

Creation of a five-year action plan has allowed monitoring of strategies for completion and follow-up. The action plan incorporates a timeline that allows for review to determine whether goals are being met. The Visiting Team recommends the school continue to develop strategies for improving scores in algebra, geometry, and science, as well as resolving issues with minority students. Collaboration with the district and middle schools is currently underway to develop programs and strategies to deal with areas of concern.

The Visiting Team suggests that to embed DRSLs in the curriculum required faculty buy-in, and that focus groups began to build knowledge that led to buy-in from the staff. It is not just administratively driven. Northridge High School teachers value their role and empowerment to make changes and create plans and strategies.

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

Northridge High School has established an environment that supports productive change and continuous improvement. The administration has created a model of shared leadership that does not depend solely on the school leadership. Rather, the administration appears to be open to suggestions from the faculty and community, and

a green light has been given to risk takers. If the faculty can establish the value of change, administration is supportive of the process. Examples of shared leadership and building sustainability of programs are found in such things as ongoing committees and staff training and development. The staff conducts monthly academy meetings, weekly meetings as departments, and advisory meetings to discuss concerns. Student surveys have been used to gather opinions and feedback on the effectiveness of student advisory. A shared vision exists among staff and administration that allows stakeholders to collaborate and continue to monitor, discuss, and modify programs and policies as necessary.

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

During the previous full self-study, Northridge High School generally omitted action plans; however, significant progress has been made in implementing the action plans developed since the last site visit. A five-year plan was developed and implemented three years ago. Since setting and taking action on these goals, the school has accelerated professional growth in response to student learning needs and development of collaboration models. Since the last visit, Northridge High School appears to have recognized the value of a data-driven, results-oriented plan.

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

The previous Visiting Team report identified major recommendations that Northridge High School has seriously considered and addressed:

- Utilizing a School Profile – Northridge High School has demonstrated a more thorough effort identify who is learning and who is not through the self-study’s school profile. The school is developing a capacity and skill at working with data.
- Expand the Academy Program – The Academy program has been modified a few times since the last site visit to be inclusionary and better suited to meet the needs of all students at Northridge High School.
- Align Mission, Belief, DRSLs, and Action Plans – The school leadership has facilitated a sincere effort to engage all stakeholders in revisiting and refining the school agenda. There is clear alignment among these principles that guide decision making and invoke commitment through a clearly articulated direction for the school.
- Improved Communication – A spirit of meaningful participation and engagement exists at the school. The school’s staff purposefully promote the school’s agenda and accomplishments within the school district and the community, and even across the nation. As Northridge is a “closed attendance school,” the opportunity

to be enrolled there is valued by the parents and students the Visiting Team interviewed.

## CHAPTER 5: COMMUNITY BUILDING

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

The Visiting Team discovered that successful efforts have been made to foster community building and a working relationship within the school. The school's faculty members seem to work well with each other. Within the Academy program, the teachers are able to collaborate as interdepartmental teams on a weekly basis. The administration is willing and supportive of the teachers and students, as well as the parents in the community. Parents feel they can make suggestions that will be taken seriously by the administration.

Collaborative programs and services have been implemented at the school to create and sustain a learning environment. Examples of these programs include:

- Teacher collaboration (PLC and SLC).
- The School Community Council.
- Student advisory and tutorial periods.
- The PTSA.

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

Northridge High School has established a wide range of collaborative networks that support the school in its efforts to increase student learning. Communication among the staff, parents, and students is developing through a monthly newsletter, school and teacher websites, and planners. The school introduces sophomores to Northridge by hosting "First Night," a program designed to explain the Academies, clubs, and other involvement opportunities and ease the transition into high school.

The school has a strong concurrent enrollment agreement with Weber State and other universities statewide. This network enables students to earn college credit while still attending high school. At this time, Northridge has more concurrent enrollment classes than any other high school in the area.

Finally, the school has built a collaborative relationship with Hill Air Force Base, surrounding city councils, and local businesses. Students are able to participate in job shadowing, internships, and work-study programs. The Visiting Team commends

Northridge High School for its efforts to establish an extensive network of community supports that enhance student learning opportunities.

- 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 entire school community was involved in the self-study process. Through interviews with the faculty, staff, and community members, it became apparent that there was a high level of participation by every stakeholder. The ISQ Survey suggested that community affiliation was low, but after speaking with the School Community Council members, the Visiting Team did not find that to be a consideration.

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

Northridge High School staff members employ a number of methods to inform and communicate with parents and students. The school has an automated phone call system that calls to the homes of students and informs them of upcoming events. Most faculty members have working websites on which students and parents can look at upcoming assignments and projects. The students are given school/personal planners with key dates written in. The school has three parent-teacher conferences per year to give parents face-to-face time with the teachers. Furthermore, the administration invites parents to a “lunch with the Principal” on a monthly basis. These efforts not only inform patrons of school events and activities, but also provide parents and community members with an opportunity to discuss issues or concerns with Northridge High School’s administration.

## **CHAPTER 6: MAJOR COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE VISITING TEAM**

### **Commendations:**

- The Visiting Team commends the school staff. Northridge High School has committed energetic educators who are willing to evaluate and refine their practices and focus on student learning outcomes. This talented staff has given a sincere and meaningful effort to the “Collaborating for Student Achievement” self-study.
- The Visiting Team commends the strong and positive school environment and connection with the community. The school has expanded the Academy (small learning communities) model to meet the needs of all students. Various learning supports have been developed to help students achieve.

- The Visiting Team commends the school leadership that has created a climate of innovation, a spirit of collaboration, and a positive culture where stakeholders feel free to utilize and contribute to research-based best practices. Shared leadership and an emphasis on connections have enhanced this innovative spirit and healthy school culture.

**Recommendations:**

- The Visiting Team recommends that Northridge High School further develop the DRSLs as school-wide learning objectives and effectively embed these learning objectives into the educational practices of the school. Next steps could include collaboratively identifying the indicators and intended learning outcomes for each standard, then explicitly teaching to and assessing student progress on these achievement targets.
- The Visiting Team recommends that the school continue to actively identify student achievement gaps and thoughtfully provide academic support for all learners. Patterns of enrollment and achievement, as well as ceilings to educational opportunities, need to be continually explored and addressed to meet the growing diverse needs and high expectations of the school community.
- The Visiting Team recommends that Northridge High School continue the small learning community collaboration that supports holistic, student-centered learning and development. Northridge High School will further benefit as it also utilizes and refines departmental professional learning community teams in developing stronger curriculum and instruction, quality assessments (formative and summative), and employment of best practices for learning enhancements and interventions.