The Report of the
Accreditation Visiting Team

Oakgrove School

1325 Washington Boulevard
Ogden, Utah 84401

February 9, 2012

Utah State Office of Education
250 East 500 South
P.O. Box 144200
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1325 Washington Boulevard
Ogden, Utah 84401

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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, February 9, 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 Oakgrove 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 Administrators, Pat Murdoch and Dennis Liddell is also commended.

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

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

OAKGROVE SCHOOL
AND
OAKGROVE EDUCATION SERVICES PROGRAM

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Pat Murdoch.....President
Dennis Liddell .....Secretary/Vice President
Kathy Dimick .....Treasurer/Member
Karen Nickel.....Member
Rich Dimick.....Member

ADMINISTRATION

Pat Murdoch .....Director
Dennis Liddell..... Director
Heidi Perry.....Coordinator

OAKGROVE SCHOOL

ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF

School Administration

Emily Liddell ..... Principal
John Cal Evans..... Assistant Principal

Counseling

Karen Nickel (Ogden)..... Counselor
Ryan Richter (Ogden)..... Counselor
Todd Bird (Canyons) ..... Counselor
Pat Murdoch ..... Counselor
Dennis Liddell..... Counselor

Support Staff

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Jaymee Morgan (Ogden)
Christine LeJeuene (SLC)

Faculty

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Marvin Baker
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Tina Butler
Suzanne Ciraulo
Emily Daughton
Dean Higby (SLC)
Kathy Kelly (SLC)
Elizabeth Neily (SLC)
Brandi Pickett (SLC)
Suzette Thomas
Jo Thompson (SLC)

OAKGROVE SCHOOL
AND
OAKGROVE EDUCATION SERVICES PROGRAMS

MISSION STATEMENT

Oakgrove School provides a creative environment where students are encouraged to maximize their abilities and develop life skills.

BELIEF STATEMENTS

- Students learn in different ways and will be provided with a variety of instructional approaches to support their learning.
- Students learn best when they are provided with ample and appropriate opportunities for success.
- Each student is a valued individual with unique intellectual, social, emotional and physical needs.
- A safe and physically comfortable environment promotes student learning.
- Teachers, administrators, counselors, parents, and the community at large share the responsibility for advancing the school's mission.

DESIRED RESULTS FOR STUDENT LEARNING (DRSLs)

1. Problem Solving
2. Practical Application of Knowledge
3. Personal Responsibility

Date of visit*:* February 9, 2012

MEMBERS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Robert Stillwell, USOE/NWAC Accreditation Consultant, Visiting Team Chairperson

Jonathan Jones, Principal Emeritus, Discovery Academy

Fred Roberts, Lincoln Academy

VISITING TEAM REPORT

OAKGROVE SCHOOL

CHAPTER 1: SCHOOL PROFILE

Oakgrove School and Oakgrove Education Services are an outgrowth of Woodland Hills School and Woodland Hills Education Services, founded in 1992. Oakgrove School and Oakgrove Education Services were incorporated in 2008. Oakgrove School, located in Ogden, provides services to students residing in Waterfall Canyon Treatment Center. Oakgrove Education Services provides contracted education services to six Utah school districts at Lifeline Treatment Center in North Salt Lake and provides the home/hospital services for students in Canyons School District.

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

The school and related programs have proven, positive track records and are fully functioning.

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

Future profiles should include achievement data showing baselines, gains and overall progress of students' achievement on DRSL goals.

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

The school's self-study was skillfully constructed. Participation from all stakeholder groups is evident. School improvement goals have been identified and action plans are being developed to implement goals.

<u>Suggested Areas for Further Inquiry:</u>

- The formal assessments have been identified. Collecting and reporting student achievement data is a next step.

- Consider using informal, teacher-made assessments as evidence of student learning.

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?*

Oakgrove School's mission, beliefs and desired results for student leaning (DRSLs) were developed in collaboration with its teachers and staff from Waterfall Canyon RTC. They appropriately address the needs of the student population and set expectations for improvement.

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

There is strong support for increasing student learning, both intellectually and behaviorally. This support is evident in the school environment and shared by every staff member.

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

For academic progress, the Wide Range Achievement Test is administered to all students. The Behavioral Assessment System for Children (BASC) measures behavior and it is tracked to see improvements in adaptive behavior. Teachers create classroom assessments of students' progress.

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 culture of the school conveys a structured, caring environment where students are given support and expected to improve.

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 curriculum is carefully aligned with the Core Curriculum. Each teacher has mapped the specific content of courses to show its connections to the Core Curriculum.

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

It was evident from the visit that all students are engaged in meaningful intellectual development. The school has an orderliness that supports students being required to think.

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

The school staff works collaboratively to continuously develop lessons and processes that will assist students in making academic progress on achieving DRSL goals.

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

The teachers have a good grasp of where students are in their curriculum. More teacher-made assessments should be developed to show students where they stand in terms of meeting expectations for completing courses.

Instruction:

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

Oakgrove School teachers are commended for meeting a very wide range of learner needs. The range of student achievement in each class requires all teachers to have a wide variety of strategies available to accommodate learner needs.

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?*

Regarding the Problem-Solving DRSL, teachers are well on their way to explicitly teaching the literacy and numeracy skills. Regarding the Practical Applications of Knowledge and Personal Responsibility DRSLs, professional development time will need to be invested to develop school-wide assessments.

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?*

To date, much of the professional development training has been dedicated to having the teachers participate in the accreditation process. Future professional development

should be directed toward having the teachers collaboratively develop school-wide assessments for the non-academic DRSLs.

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?*

Members of the teaching staff are highly competent in their content areas. They display a strong sense of professionalism.

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 the restrictive nature of technology with this student population, this is not a high priority within the school. Many students have been able to earn their computer literacy credits at the Ogden Applied Technology College once their progress merits that degree of independence.

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?*

These assessments have been developed to a greater degree for the Problem-Solving DRSL, and to a lesser degree for the two other DRSLs.

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

The teachers have a good grasp of where their students stand with regard to academic expectations. There is a goal to collect and report the trend data to show how the students as a group are progressing.

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

Within the classrooms, the teachers are making good use of student data. The school is working on how it will report the data that shows evidence of the effectiveness of the school's program of studies on students in general.

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 teachers have begun developing the assessments for their own courses. A next step would be sharing their results with each other to develop school-wide assessments. The teachers are already using a wide range of strategies, and they need time to decide what works best across curricula.

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

There is agreement that the school needs to better utilize standardized testing results obtained at intake and exit from the program to measure school's effectiveness. There is great teamwork evident among the staff, so it is within their reach to collaboratively decide what strategies and data points will be incorporated into school-wide assessments.

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 provided for quality instruction by building a highly qualified faculty, combined with learning and teaching materials and physical facilities that support teaching and learning. The classrooms are appropriate to the subject areas and activities for which they are used. Small class sizes provide for a high level of individual attention in order to meet the needs of the students. The A/B class schedule ensures that there is no overload in the teacher-to-student ratio.

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 makes effective use of standardized testing (i.e., the Wide Range Achievement Test to measure student development and progress in learning skills), as well as the effectiveness of the Oakgrove educational program. Testing of individual students is carried out on a regular basis, with record keeping designed to track students individually as well as collectively. Progress is being made in order to graphically display test results. Student academic achievement and progress are also assessed by means of grading student work. Teachers meet weekly to collaboratively deal with issues relating to school policies and procedures. New or revised policies are developed collaboratively. Also, student staffing occurs weekly, and there are monthly in-service training sessions.

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?*

Due to the small size of the faculty, the DRSLs for Oakgrove School were developed by the faculty as a whole. Copies of the school's DRSLs are posted over or adjacent to each teacher's desk in each classroom. As a result, the DRSLs are the focus of teachers in all disciplines who worked collaboratively to ensure effective application and alignment to the curriculum in relation to the various subjects. This provides for a cross-curricular emphasis, updated and reviewed in the weekly meetings. Accommodations to meet individual student needs, including accommodations recommended in IEPs, are made almost entirely in the mainstream classroom. In addition, each teacher has an annual budget with which to buy, update or supplement current educational materials for their course and classroom needs. All technology and media products are purchased and made available for the use of all teachers and students as appropriate. The well-managed classrooms housed in well-designed facilities, along with positive teacher-student relationships, result in a safe atmosphere of mutual respect.

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 Oakgrove faculty works collaboratively with the administration on the development, implementation, and revision of school policies. The weekly meetings provide the regular, frequent opportunity for input and discussion. This, along with the provision of an annual budget for each teacher, empowers "buy-in" to the educational program and seems to have created a team spirit among the members of the faculty and staff. The organization seems to best be described as "inclusive" and "collaborative" rather than "top-down" in the development, revision, and implementation of policy. Both faculty and staff members seem to be highly committed to the mission of the school, and to the personal application in meeting the needs of individual students.

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?*

Oakgrove School has a developed and functioning system for providing each student with the means of establishing positive relationships and receiving assistance in achieving the school's expectations for learning. Each student has a member of the faculty who serves as a student advocate. Also, each student has a therapist who works with the student in meeting learning and emotional needs. Thus, each student has a minimum of two adults who are available at all times to meet and to work on fulfilling individual and personal needs.

School Services:

This standard is dealt with in the school's NAAS Annual Report, which requires specific responses and information regarding student support services, guidance services, health services, library information services, special education services, and family and community services.

Facilities and Finances:

This standard is addressed in the school's annual report to Northwest, which requires specific responses regarding the physical plant, finances, audit of school records, advertising, etc.

CHAPTER 4: NORTHWEST SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT STANDARD

Culture of Continual Improvement:

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

It appears that the school is in the beginning stages of a school-wide improvement plan, based on *Collaborating for Student Achievement,* the Utah accreditation/school improvement process. It is obvious that there is a school plan, but the school is working to align itself more closely with the Utah plan.

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?*

Oakgrove School has daily staff meeting where the teachers and administrators discuss each day's successes and challenges. The teachers are encouraged to collaborate with each other and discuss what is working in the classroom. Since all of the teachers work with each of the students at some time during the day, they are able to understand, support, and share ideas that are aimed at achieving individual student success. The school is very aware of what motivates each individual student.

Because of the unique student makeup of the school, the teachers and administration closely monitor each student, including being aware of successes or difficulties at the students' residences.

Teachers are encouraged to, and do, participate in continuing education courses, including, earning graduate degrees in education. Teacher lesson plans and units are reviewed by the administration and the teachers are evaluated in the classroom by the administration quarterly.

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?*

Oakgrove's school-wide action plan is focused on the specific learning and behavior of each of its students. Because of the unique environment and special needs of the students, the student education at the school is highly individualized. It includes the continual reviewing of the students' IEPs and 504s. The school's action plan includes helping the students take more ownership in their individual learning and behavior. The students are given the ability and responsibility to take themselves out of a situation that may escalate into a more severe problem. For example, if a student recognizes that he/she is becoming overly frustrated, he/she knows that he/she has the ability to remove himself/herself from the classroom, and return when he/she becomes calm and relaxed. There was concern in the beginning that students with the ability to be accountable for their personal behavior might abuse this procedure, but the opposite has been true—the students have grown in their ability to be accountable for their personal behavior.

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

Teachers are given the freedom to explore and teach the students using their individual talents and personalities. The teachers who were observed had an obvious understanding of the needs, challenges, and abilities of each of their students. The Visiting Team observed the teachers challenging the students, encouraging the students to perform at higher levels than the students were accustomed to. In each case, the students responded positively to the challenge. It was obvious that the students knew that their teachers wanted the very best outcomes for each of them.

There are ongoing reward programs throughout the school, both within the classroom and school-wide. During the visit there was a school-wide opportunity for the students to attend a field trip that would take the students to the Snow Basin Ski Resort, where the students could watch the "Dew Tour" skiing and snowboard competitions. The students were excited about this and worked very hard to record enough points from the point system that was implemented. This was one example of the ongoing reward system that is in place at Oakgrove.

Students at Oakgrove are given clear goals for academic and behavioral success. Each student has his/her personal behavior plan, with goals for improvement. Students are also given academic goals and incentives for success.

CHAPTER 5: COMMUNITY BUILDING

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

There is positive teamwork between the residential and school programs. The students are well known by the staff, and there is regular sharing of information pertinent to student progress.

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

The school believes that it is important to help others and give to the community. Students give service to the Ogden Police Department, local homeless shelters, local agencies working with the elderly, and the Ogden City Parks and Recreation Department. The transition program leads the Community Service team. In addition, students are transitioning from Oakgrove School to appropriate vocational programs at the Ogden Applied Technology College.

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

There has been participation from throughout the staff in conducting focus groups. The self-study process also involved input from a recent parent visitation to the school.

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

The school and treatment teams will share goals and action plans with parents, as well as commendations and recommendations from Visiting Team.

CHAPTER 6: MAJOR COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Commendations:

- The Visiting Team commends Oakgrove School for its commitment to small class sizes where teachers can give students one-on-one help with their academic learning.

- The Visiting Team commends Oakgrove School's teachers for accommodating a wide range of learner needs and for using direct instruction.

- The Visiting Team commends Oakgrove School for implementing the "Take 5" strategy to help students relieve stress. This adds to the caring, supportive environment provided by staff.

- The Visiting Team commends Oakgrove School's teachers for having students verbalize that it is their teachers at Oakgrove that make the positive difference to their success in school.

Recommendations:

- The Visiting Team recommends that Oakgrove School define how it will measure student success in achieving the desired results for student learning. The DRSLs have indicators, but specific data on student performance needs to be collected and reported.

- The Visiting Team recommends that Oakgrove School follow up on goals in action plans and directly link them to student progress on DRSLs.

- The Visiting Team recommends that Oakgrove School help teachers develop informal classroom assessments that show evidence of the academic progress of the students.