

**The Report of the
Accreditation Visiting Team**

**Ogden Preparatory Academy
2221 Grant Avenue
Ogden, Utah 84401**

March 12-13, 2012



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

Ogden Preparatory Academy
2221 Grant Avenue
Ogden, Utah 84401

March 12-13, 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, March 12-13, 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 Ogden Preparatory Academy 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 Kathleen Thornburg is also commended.

The staff and administration are congratulated for their desire for excellence at Ogden Preparatory Academy 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 Ogden Preparatory Academy.

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State Superintendent
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*** CMAC Representative Appointment

*****Charter School Representative Appointment

**UCAT Representative

****USBA Advisory Representative Appointment

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Robert MitchellVice Principal
Lauretta Hill Assistant Principal/Director of Special Ed

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Nancy Favero Counselor at Secondary

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Gin WatsonSecretary at Secondary
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Terri Hurst
Jerri Johnson
Sherri Karren
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Katherine Witt
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OGDEN PREPARATORY ACADEMY

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Ogden Preparatory Academy, through a bilingual education, is to create an environment where our students will gain:

- A passion for lifelong learning,
- Respect for themselves and others,
- Confidence in their own abilities, and
- Competence to thrive as productive and responsible citizens in the global community.

BELIEF STATEMENTS

- Students' learning needs are the primary focus of all the decisions impacting the work or our school.
- Students learn best when they are actively engaged in the learning process.
- Curriculum, instruction, and assessment should be provided in a variety of ways to accommodate differences in learning styles.
- Each student is a valued individual with unique physical, social, emotional, and intellectual needs.
- A safe and physically comfortable learning environment promotes student learning.
- Cultural diversity can increase students' understanding of different peoples and cultures.
- Faculty, staff, administrators, parents, caregivers, and the community share the responsibility of advancing the school's mission.
- The commitment to continuous improvement is imperative if our school is going to enable students to become confident, self-directed, lifelong learners.

DESIRED RESULTS FOR STUDENT LEARNING (DRSLs)

1. Students will demonstrate the use of lifelong learning skills.
2. Students will demonstrate bilingual ability in English and Spanish.
3. Students will demonstrate respect for themselves and others.

Date of visit: March 12-13, 2012

MEMBERS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Edy McGee, Indian Hills Middle School, Canyons School District, Visiting Team
Co-Chairperson

Deborah Swensen, Hawthorn Academy Charter School, Visiting Team Co-Chairperson

Joni Bauer, George Washington Academy

Janice Combe, Utah State Office of Education

Mary Heeringa, Early Light Academy

VISITING TEAM REPORT

OGDEN PREPARATORY ACADEMY

CHAPTER 1: SCHOOL PROFILE

Ogden Preparatory Academy is the first charter school based in Ogden, Utah. It is located in the inner city. Begun in 2003 as a K-5 school, Ogden Preparatory Academy was built with the idea that children should have an affordable, quality education in a safe, nurturing environment. The school expanded to K-6 the following year in response to parent requests. Currently it is a K-9 school located in three buildings in two separate locations. The school configuration is that elementary students (K-4 students) are housed in one building, intermediate students (5-6) in a second building, and secondary students (7-9) in a third. In 2010, the school doubled in size as it looked to the future. The school plans to construct its own buildings, and has concluded that it needs a broader student base.

The school states that it offers a public school education with private school quality. That includes uniforms, discipline, a student-teacher ratio of one to 25, and employee accountability. Parents are expected to volunteer and be active in the school.

Mrs. Kathy Thornburg has been the principal since the school was created. She is successfully assisted by two assistant principals.

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

The profile reveals that the school has experienced steady growth since its beginnings. Although the student body is predominately Caucasian, there are a substantial number of Hispanic children enrolled. Additionally, approximately 5.5 percent of its student body represents other minorities.

The profile also indicates that Ogden Preparatory Academy strives to meet student needs by offering extracurricular clubs at all levels of the school. The offerings of extracurricular activities increase at the intermediate and secondary levels. The school offers seven sports at the secondary level.

The school identified three disciplinary infractions that it felt needed to be addressed: wearing of name badges, tardiness, and planner use. The profile indicated that, overall, infractions in these three areas have been reduced. Furthermore, it indicated that tardiness was the largest problem, and that eighth grade is the grade with the highest percentage of repeat offenders.

Data from student, parent, and teacher surveys is included in the profile. The results of the surveys overwhelmingly state that stakeholders are pleased with the school, students

feel safe at the school, the staff makes concerted efforts to meet the needs of the children, and communication is ongoing and effective.

The profile also shows that the school has made adequate yearly progress during the past three years. Ogden Preparatory Academy's scores are on par with or higher than those of the schools in Ogden School District. Although the majority of Ogden Preparatory Academy's students are making progress, the profile also indicated that there is a small achievement gap between the Caucasian students and their Hispanic and low SES counterparts. There is a larger gap between the Caucasian students and students with disabilities. That the school uses test data is evident from the efforts it makes to help students who are not making progress. The school has a teacher aide in each elementary classroom, a homework recovery and tutoring program, and a child assessment team. The school is using an RTI model and focuses on quality Tier 1 instruction and appropriate Tier 2 and 3 interventions.

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

The Visiting Team suggests that there be an explanation of the data included in the profile. Specifically, the Visiting Team needs to know how the data is used, what trends the data reveals, and which students are learning and not learning. Also, Ogden Preparatory Academy should indicate changes in its population and the impact those changes have on the school, and should identify its accelerated students by grade level and subject area. Finally, Ogden Preparatory Academy should include the letter grades for students by subgroups in the intermediate and secondary schools.

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

Although the Visiting Team had to clarify some of the information in the profile, it became clear that the staff at Ogden Preparatory Academy has a strong sense of the school's identity, what its strengths and limitations are, and what steps it needs to take in order to continue its journey of continuous improvement.

Suggested Areas for Further Inquiry:

- Know which individual students are learning and which are not learning.
- Disaggregate all data by subgroup, and identify learning gaps among groups so that specific strategies can be used to help those who are not learning to succeed.

CHAPTER 2: NORTHWEST ACCREDITATION COMMISSION (NORTHWEST) TEACHING AND LEARNING STANDARDS

Mission, Beliefs and Desired Results for Student Learning (DRSLs):

- a) *To what degree were the school's mission statement, beliefs, and DRSLs developed and/or revised collaboratively by the school community to define a compelling purpose and vision for the school and to support student achievement?*

The Visiting Team found the mission statement, beliefs and DRSLs to be in line with the school's daily practice. The DRSLs are a direct reflection of the school's mission and beliefs. The Visiting Team's classroom observations indicated that the staff appears committed to the vision of the mission, beliefs and DRSLs. The Visiting Team also found that the students believe the DRSLs were incorporated in their educational experience. In talking with students, several explained how the DRSLs were taught in their classrooms.

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

The Visiting Team found Ogden Preparatory Academy to be in line with all mission and belief statements, as well as DRSLs. The evidence was clear from observations and conversations that the general school climate and culture support the DRSLs. The staff, parents, and administration are dedicated to the mission, beliefs and DRSLs.

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

The Visiting Team found the indicators to be appropriate, in-depth and comprehensive. The Visiting Team found the indicators were easily measured through various formative and summative assessments. Various indicators are clearly aligned to mission, beliefs, and 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 Visiting Team found that, to a large extent, the mission, beliefs and DRSLs appeared to guide the decisions and policies of the school. The Visiting Team found evidence that the culture of the school reflects respect, continuous learning, and a desire to be bilingual. The Visiting Team was concerned, however, about the lack of bilingual education in classroom visits.

Curriculum:

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

The Visiting Team found the staff collaborated well. Grade level teams meet monthly and more often as needed. Grade-level teachers follow the state standards and ensure that both they and their students understand the connection of the concepts in the standards to the DRSLs. The Visiting Team found evidence of collaboration between different grades in the sharing of testing results and student achievement information.

Grade-level teams also engage in vertical collaboration with teachers above and below their grade. Collaboration is also done among the different buildings—elementary (K-4), intermediate (5-6), and secondary (7-9). Once a month, a meeting is held with the faculty from all three schools.

Teachers are knowledgeable in the Utah Core Curriculum and the Utah Life Skills. This was shown by curriculum maps, classroom observations, and student responses.

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

The Visiting Team found all students to be engaged in the curriculum. Language arts and math classes had ability groupings within the classroom. Through the math program, higher-order thinking questions were presented and related to real-life situations. Students were encouraged to use manipulatives to discover mathematical principles.

During a visit to a science class, Visiting Team observed that the teacher used several strategies to engage all students. Students use inquiry in discovering characteristics of nature along the river walk. They visited the river and observed various river traits. During this activity, students problem-solved both together and individually. They used higher-order thinking skills in discovering some scientific data and how it affects their world.

Questions were posed to students to develop higher-order thinking skills throughout all curriculum areas and throughout all grade levels. Students were also encouraged to collaborate with each other to discover answers to the higher-order questions.

- 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 Visiting Team found evidence of the staff working to develop curriculum focused on the school's DRSLs. School-wide programs such as SLANT, posting of learning objectives, and collaboration between students supported the DRSLs within the curriculum. The students are aware of the DRSLs and how they connect to the curriculum and student learning.

The Visiting Team found when the teachers meet they are focusing the curriculum on DRSLs and developing lifelong learners. Curriculum maps are completed for the year, and have sections written to highlight the DRSLs and show implementation.

The students understand the DRSLs and how they related to the classroom curriculum. The strongest example was in the demonstration of lifelong learning skills. Students are able to express how service learning projects and classroom instruction would teach the lifelong learning skills. The weakest area is the demonstration of bilingual ability. Classrooms had posters and basic phrases posted in Spanish. However, true bilingual teaching was not observed. Though lessons were not observed, lessons were planned to help students demonstrate respect for themselves and others.

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

The Visiting Team found that there are many assessments being done throughout the school. The assessments are frequent and ongoing. The teachers use the assessments to identify holes in the curriculum and show where there are student weaknesses. With support from the administration, the staff is able to re-teach as needed and move forward with the curriculum as students are ready.

Instruction:

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

The Visiting Team found instructional strategies through classroom observation. Teachers used various methods through the mission, beliefs and DRSLs. The Visiting Team also found that the teachers and staff share their ideas and strategies. The Visiting Team found the students were involved with a variety of strategies.

- 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 Visiting Team found strategies for explicit and inquiry-based teaching throughout the school. Evidence of DRSLs is in place in each classroom, and a large percentage of teachers refer to these DRSLs throughout the day. Students understand the DRSLs through application.

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

The Visiting Team found that professional development programs are in place, and that the staff members are encouraged to participate in professional development to increase their knowledge in any content area they are interested in. The Visiting Team also found that the administration is very willing to provide training as well as encourage lifelong

learning opportunities. Professional development at Ogden Preparatory Academy exists through faculty meetings, vertical team meetings and team meetings on a monthly basis.

- 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 Visiting Team found the teachers at Ogden Preparatory Academy to be proficient in all content areas. The teachers are encouraged to search current research as well as to share and reflect upon their own practices. The Visiting Team found evidence of research being used in the classroom through technology, as well as teachers' willingness to make extra efforts outside of contact time to find information to implement in their classrooms.

- 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 Visiting Team found that both technology and state testing are used as sources of data. Evidence of technology was found through classroom observations in the form of laptops, LCD projectors, and document cameras. In the elementary school, iPads are used to help students with interventions. The teachers feel they are well supported through training and an IT person on staff. There was also evidence of the use of technology for curriculum mapping. The Visiting Team would encourage the school to update block testing in order to assess through technology, as well as listing instructional materials for students.

Assessment:

- a) *To what extent has the staff developed classroom or school-wide assessments with performance standards based on clearly articulated expectations for student achievement?*

The Visiting Team found that the staff has developed or utilized assessments with performance standards based on clearly articulated expectations. The school utilizes the Ogden Block Tests and has tweaked them by grades to better fit the new Common Core and Ogden Preparatory Academy's curriculum. Not all grades use the same assessment.

Ogden Preparatory has been using the Six Traits rubrics to assess writing after identifying a need in this area. The school is establishing anchor papers and is in the process of modifying the rubrics for each grade level's expectation. However, the ninth grade English teacher has adapted the AP writing rubric rather than using the Six Traits rubric to better prepare students for high school. While the rubric is different, the teacher did connect it to English work in grades 7 and 8.

Not all teachers use the block tests. Some teachers utilized the assessments at the end of textbook chapters. It is recommended that the teachers continue to work together within content areas to develop classroom assessments. Teachers using the assessments included

in the purchased curriculum should revisit them to ensure they align to the Utah State Core.

The Visiting Team found that Ogden Preparatory Academy has a clear understanding of the RTI model and uses assessments to identify the learning needs of students. The staff uses data to identify students who need additional support and the specific concept in which each student needs support.

The school has also purchased a number of formative assessments that are used across all grades in the elementary (DIBELS). Each grade uses DIBELS reading and Saxon Math in grades K-6. If a student does not do well on the DIBELS, teachers review the data and utilize it to place students in ability groups for instruction. Paraprofessionals are trained on how to provide remediation. They, along with the classroom teacher, provide additional instruction.

Teachers also review the CRTs at the beginning of the year and utilize the results to set individual and team goals regarding what they need to address and how. Grade level teams pass to the next year's teacher the current year's data. This enables the teachers to continue to build upon the instruction the student has received and to know each student's needs.

It is recommended that the staff disaggregate data by subgroup.

- 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 Visiting Team found that the school has teachers assess the effectiveness of their instructional effectiveness through an evaluation of the previous spring's CRTs. The teachers also utilize the data to identify the concepts on which their incoming students did not perform well in order to help them understand where to start instruction with each student.

The staff also utilizes the DIBELS complete battery (grades K-6) and modified Ogden block tests (all grades) to fairly assess individual progress. Data also determines additional instruction from the teacher or teaching assistants individually or in small groups to increase academic understanding. Students are grouped according to ability based on formative assessments. Group composition may change after analysis of each Block test results and the other formative assessments given during the school year. Teachers also use data to learn how to adjust instruction or re-teach concepts. The process is consistent and equitable to track individual progress in achieving academic progress.

Data is used to determine which special education students need an additional support class in a content area, or only an aide's help within a regular class. This practice is strong in the middle school. Students are also placed into ability level classes in core areas such as honors English, middle English and lower-level English classes.

In addition, each teacher must submit weekly student performance data to the principal, who then analyzes the data and reviews it with the team leaders. Together they analyze the data and identify the students who are not succeeding academically in content areas. The Visiting Team recommends that the school disaggregate the data by subgroup to identify trends.

Special education teaching assistants track student progress, and in the special education team meeting teaching assistants and teachers evaluate the progress of students. Accommodations and instructional strategies are adjusted based on the data. A student progress report is maintained on each special education student.

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

The Visiting Team found that the staff does a review of the CRTs at the beginning of the year. Teachers administer formative assessments such as block tests and review formative data on each student each month. The data is also submitted to the principal and reviewed by her with the team leads. At the elementary level, individual students who need additional support are identified. The team leads then meet with the rest of the grade-level teachers, and they collaborate to determine how additional support services will be provided and by whom—teacher or teaching assistants. Teaching assistants meet weekly or bi-weekly with their grade-level team teachers to share the progress data for the students with whom they work. In some grades, the teaching assistants have divided the kids by specific skills, so that each teaching assistant has a specific focus for his or her work with kids (e.g., sight words, writing, conversation words, etc.). The first grade team has found this to be effective. The Visiting Team applauds the administration for its support of allowing each grade level teacher to find the best way to provide additional academic support. Groups are fluid and are adjusted weekly, as needed.

The staff meets once a month as vertical teams and reviews the curriculum and student progress. Ability groups are adjusted based on the formative data. Elementary teachers keep a “cum card” on each child. They enter data on DIBELS, Reading (A-Z) levels, Words Their Way levels, and writing proficiency three times a year. Each grade level’s sheet varies a little based on the data collected at that grade. The amount of block test data depends on the number of units covered. The data sheets help to provide a clear insight into each student’s progress and is then passed to the student’s next year’s teacher at the end of the year.

Special education teachers track data from the classroom and data from their assessments. A form called *Ready, Set, Access* is shared with general education teachers that provides general ed and school-wide accommodations, specific concerns, and reading and math levels. General ed and special ed staff members meet together during subject and grade level team meetings. The Special Education Department works in collaboration with each staff member at the three buildings to determine what training is needed for the aides providing support to students in the classroom. The data form is adjusted to meet the

needs of each building. The data also helps to drive training for the teaching assistants. If current strategies are not working, training is adjusted.

In addition, the librarian tracks the data on the materials checkout by grade and by genre. This has been done as trend data, which was shared with the school accreditation team and the administration. The data helps to guide the school regarding which books need to be added to the library. The librarian also tracks her academic support and collaboration with each grade.

- 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 staff at Ogden Preparatory Academy provides opportunities for teachers to collaborate to review data and curriculum. CRT data is reviewed at the beginning of the year. A great strength of the school's staff is that it meets once a month as vertical teams to share strategies, review data, and discuss curriculum and student academic achievement expectations for each grade. The Visiting Team found that this year the staff is working to bring consistency to the use of writing rubrics. The goal is inter-rater reliability. Each month teachers bring student papers and work to develop anchor papers at each grade level.

Teachers also submit a writing sample with the rubric to the principal each month. Teachers submit a high, a middle, and a low example.

Teachers meet each year to discuss data from state summative tests and their purchased and grade-developed formative tests. The Visiting Team applauds the work to utilize common assessments and make instruction data driven. This is especially strong in the elementary grades (K-4). However, in grades 5-9 it is not as strong and not as deep. The Visiting Team recommends that the upper grades increase their development of common assessments.

The Visiting Team found that the Ogden Preparatory Academy faculty members share instructional strategies and data at their monthly meeting.

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

The Visiting Team found that data was collected to support the identified DRSL. The school administration and faculty did identify that the school is in the beginning phase of developing rubrics as a scoring tool to assess the effectiveness of their action plan in implementing their DRSL. It is recommended that the school develop rubrics to assess the effectiveness of the implementation of their DRSLs. The school also needs to determine what data it will collect to support effective implementation of the school DRSLs.

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 Visiting Team found strong evidence that the school leadership of Ogden Preparatory School promotes quality instruction. Team leaders and teachers at the elementary, intermediate, and secondary levels stressed that Ogden Preparatory Academy is not a “top-down school.” They feel that their input is welcome and evaluated, which creates an academic learning climate that supports teaching and learning.

Furthermore, teachers at all levels confirmed that the leadership of Ogden Preparatory Academy collaborates with staff and does classroom observations. When concerns arise, the leadership talks with the involved individuals to analyze the problem to identify what is going on and how the problem can be solved. The principal does a lot of questioning to gauge the learning climate of the school.

To identify teaching practices and strategies that support teaching and learning, the principal engages in professional reading. She shares educational writings she feels are important with her staff, either by purchasing a book or by printing out portions of an article. The staff comes to faculty meeting having read the material and prepared to discuss the contents. After the discussion, a decision is made that the staff will begin the practice within the classroom. At that point, the school leadership has the expectation that the practice will be done, and when members of the administration drop into classroom they look for the application of the strategy. For example, Homework Recovery, a strategy to help students do their homework, was found and implemented using this method. During the summer, the staff read *Teach Like a Champion* by Lemov. Professional development for the year has been centered on the items in this book. Specifically, the first part of the year was spent on establishing sound classroom management. After a strategy has been implemented, faculty members are encouraged to see how the implementation looks at a particular teacher’s grade and at other grade levels as well.

Repeatedly, staff members said that they feel the leadership team is approachable, non-threatening, and open to suggestions.

- 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?*

Decisions are made collaboratively, using data and research. Individual faculty members may have an idea about a program or a strategy that they want to use. The individual(s) wanting to use the new strategy or program is expected to present the information and the

research behind the idea to the rest of the staff. After the initial introduction, teachers discuss the idea, talk to other schools using the program, and then vote on implementation. Those using the program become mentors for their more reluctant peers. For example, *Words Their Way*, a spelling program, was introduced in this manner. After implementation, grade/subject teams share the data with the administration. Another example of this type of decision making is having writing benchmarks administered three times per year. Teachers felt they needed to do something to show writing progression through the year. They found rubrics they could use for this purpose. The vertical team decides on a writing genre and topic. After the students have written to the prompt and the writing samples have been scored, teachers present a model of high, medium, and low scores to the principals. Because the faculty is composed of teachers coming from all areas of the country, and because the administrators read widely, ideas to increase student achievement and instructional effectiveness come from many sources throughout the country.

The leadership of the school also allows individual teachers or teams to present a change in curriculum and or instructional strategies if they can support their decision with research. Not all teachers have to make the implementation. If it goes well, the administration has found that others then want to implement the curriculum or strategy. The mantra of the administration is to do things incrementally. By doing things slowly the leadership—both administration and teachers—can see whether it is effective.

- 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 leadership team, particularly the principal, allocates resources wisely. Because Ogden Preparatory Academy is a Title I school, the principal has sufficient funds to purchase the items staff members need. For example, using technology is important to the school. Consequently, the school leadership team purchased technological equipment, including Smart Boards, iPads, and computers on wheels. Additionally, teachers indicated that the administration does not hesitate to free up money to purchase those things that teachers need to ensure student learning.

- d) *To what extent does the school leadership empower the entire school community and encourage commitment, participation, collaboration, and shared responsibility for student learning through meaningful roles in the decision-making process?*

The leadership team at Ogden Preparatory Academy sets high expectation for both students and teachers, and the leadership team empowers the entire school community in multiple ways in order for them to reach and exceed the expectations. For example, the secondary school wanted to add a sports component. The administration supported the idea and the parent organization supplied money for equipment. Together the teachers and the administration set requirements for student participation, including behavior and

GPA. This collaborative decision has had a great impact on the school. Specifically, students who have been struggling are receiving recognition for positive behavior.

Many of the decisions are made in a collaborative manner. The Visiting Team heard repeatedly that teachers come up with ideas that they think will improve student learning. After the idea is researched, the staff makes a decision and the strategy is implemented. If it is an idea within a team or between teams, the same process is followed.

- 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?*

This is an area in which Ogden Preparatory Academy truly excels. Parents, teachers, and administration all stated that current and former teachers know each child and look after his/her welfare. The staff spends time interacting with the students, and purposely nurtures each one. Staff members become involved with the students' lives (e.g., know their interests, their family life, and their challenges) and encourage academic success. Parents reported that the school is welcoming and their children feel wanted and valued. At the beginning of the year, the school surveys parents about their children's interests, aspirations, and concerns. That information is used as curriculum and activities are planned.

School Services:

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

Facilities and Finances:

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

CHAPTER 4: NORTHWEST SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT STANDARD

Culture of Continual Improvement:

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

The Visiting Team found that Ogden Preparatory Academy has made substantial efforts to continually improve its educational practices. This is evident throughout the school. The school has a comprehensive plan for continued improvement that is tied to the DRSLs and accepted by the school population and community stakeholders. There appear to be performance indicators established school-wide through a collaborative effort of school stakeholders. Ogden Preparatory Academy's improvement plan and progress have been reviewed and revised by several curriculum and leadership teams with the school.

- 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 found that Ogden Preparatory Academy has been consistent with its ongoing programs of professional development. Before school begins, the entire staff, which includes teachers, aides, administration, secretaries, and other building personnel, is involved in professional development. This is evident in the systematic practices of the school. Everyone in the building treats others with respect and dignity. All staff members involved with students are part of the learning team. During the school year, professional development is ongoing. There are team meetings, vertical meetings, faculty meetings, and curriculum meetings. These meetings are designed to promote student learning and are driven by data.

- 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 in the beginning stages in addressing the improvement needs of the school. There were some things that were a little lacking in the narrative and future steps of the action plan. There were some details not included in the action plan that would have tied the plan more closely to student learning. In speaking with faculty members and students, the Visiting Team found that some of the pieces are there, but the connections have not been made. One suggestion is that the action plan be tied closer to the data. Ogden Preparatory has the data; it would be helpful to relate it to the action plan.

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

The Visiting Team found that Ogden Preparatory Academy has created a mission, belief statements, and DRSLs that promote a school that is student- and improvement-oriented. The vision for this type of environment is widely accepted by all stakeholders. The administration has set the tone but has given the faculty and staff the autonomy to change and continuously improve. The Visiting Team found teachers using data to drive their curriculum and ensure student improvement. The Visiting Team also found the overall philosophy of improvement for all students. This was evident in the school's RTI, homework recovery, and attention to individual students.

CHAPTER 5: COMMUNITY BUILDING

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

The Visiting Team found a unique situation with Ogden Preparatory Academy. The K-9 schools are spread out into three different temporary buildings. Because of this the staff and students have a challenge of fostering a school community and working relationships. The administration bridges the gap with monthly faculty meetings that involve the faculty from all three buildings as well as weekly memos sent out to all staff members.

The students of Ogden Preparatory Academy have three separate student councils, one for each building (grades K-4, 5-6, and 7-9). The councils meet separately to plan activities and service projects for each building. Some of these projects are done in conjunction with other buildings. The collaboration between the student activities comes from the student council. The 7-9 student council meets twice a month. Once a month the student councils from 5-6 and 7-9 meet together.

On a class-by-class basis, different projects and events are planned between the grades. The Visiting Team observed a middle school science class planning activities to collaborate with a first grade science class. Teachers expressed that these collaborative relationships happen often between different grades.

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

There are several after-school opportunities that help support student learning. One is the homework recovery program. If a student does not complete an assignment or needs more help on an assignment, then the student will stay after school to complete the assignment and receive extra help. During the school day, classroom aides as well as parent volunteers offer networks of support to foster student learning. The hallway is an extension of the classrooms where small group and one-on-one work is done.

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

The Visiting Team found ample evidence of self-study. This was presented in the self-study booklet given to the Visiting Team prior to the visit. The school engages in frequent and ongoing assessment, which is then analyzed to identify student learning needs. This information is used to direct and guide curriculum and instruction. All of these benefit the students in their learning.

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

The Visiting Team found evidence of good communication between stakeholders with regard to school improvement. Monthly newsletters are sent home to parents with information about what is happening at Ogden Preparatory Academy and MOPA. More frequent e-mails are sent home to parents and other stakeholders from classroom teachers. Memos and e-mails are sent out to staff from the administration once a week and more often as needed. Ogden Preparatory Academy and MOPA also have a website that is updated regularly.

CHAPTER 6: MAJOR COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Commendations:

- The Visiting Team commends Ogden Preparatory Academy's administration for being supportive with resources and then allowing autonomy to the teachers to use their professional knowledge to prepare lessons and instruct students.
- The Visiting Team commends Ogden Preparatory Academy's use of data to drive instruction.
- The Visiting Team commends Ogden Preparatory Academy's commitment to the use technology.
- The Visiting Team commends Ogden Preparatory Academy's use of vertical and whole-school team meetings, resulting in a strong sense of community among all staff members. Ogden Preparatory Academy mirrors this structure with its student council meetings.
- The Visiting Team commends Ogden Preparatory Academy for the willingness of its staff to attend professional development, resulting in more opportunities for student engagement and learning.
- The Visiting Team commends Ogden Preparatory Academy for creating a climate and culture where collaboration, respect, and student progress are the norms.

Recommendations:

- The Visiting Team recommends that Ogden Preparatory Academy further disaggregate data by subgroup so that trends, students, and groups who are learning and not learning are identified in order to further refine instructional strategies.

- The Visiting Team recommends that Ogden Preparatory Academy use technology to increase student engagement and interaction at all levels of instruction.
- The Visiting Team recommends that Ogden Preparatory Academy revisit its action plan to include details to connect clearly to the DRSLs and student learning gaps.
- The Visiting Team recommends that Ogden Preparatory Academy revisit its bilingual DRSL. Ogden Preparatory Academy needs to decide whether it is going to be a bilingual school or a school where Spanish is offered as a world language. Once that decision is made, the DRSL needs to be rewritten to reflect it.
- The Visiting Team recommends that Ogden Preparatory Academy involve more support staff, parents, and students in all aspects of the self-study process.