

**The Report of the
Accreditation Visiting Team**

**Payson High School
1050 South Main
Payson, Utah 84651**

March 9-10, 2011



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

**Payson High School
1050 South Main
Payson, Utah 84651**

March 9-10, 2011

UTAH STATE OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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State Superintendent of Public Instruction**

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Salt Lake City, Utah

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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 9-10, 2011, 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 Payson High School is commended for the time and effort devoted to studying and evaluating the various facets of the total program and to preparing the materials used by the Visiting Team. The excellent leadership given by Principal Ben Ford is also commended.

The staff and administration are congratulated for their desire for excellence at Payson High School and for their professional attitude which made it possible for them to see weaknesses and strengths and to suggest procedures for improvements.

While these recommendations may be used to solicit financial support to acquire some of the materials, equipment, and services needed to carry out a more effective program, it is most important that the faculty and administration utilize them as they continue to evaluate and modify course offerings and administrative and classroom procedures to more dramatically increase student achievement at Payson High School.

Larry K. Shumway, Ed.D.
State Superintendent
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Julie Warren	Elementary Education
John Webb	Policy/504 Coordinator

PAYSON HIGH SCHOOL

ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF

School Administration

Ben Ford..... Principal
Ryan McGuire..... Assistant Principal
Brett White..... Assistant Principal

Counseling

Joy Benson..... Counselor
Kelly Newbold..... Counselor
Craig Wright..... Counselor

Support Staff

Lynn Adams
Jeremy Alvey
Barbara Arrington
Bill Benson
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Judy Skinner
Ashleigh Smith
Reed Thomson
Dennis Van Ausdal
Michelle Walker
Elwood Wall
Linda Walter
Andrew Wright

PAYSON HIGH SCHOOL

MISSION STATEMENT

We Care; We Excel.

The mission of Payson High School is to maximize every student's academic potential.

BELIEF STATEMENTS

- Each person is unique and has individual worth.
- All students can learn and prepare to be lifelong learners.
- Each person has rights with accompanying responsibilities and accountability.
- Optimal learning takes place in a climate where safety, caring, respect, trust, and high expectations exist.
- Optimal learning takes place when a person has a perceived need, is shown a benefit, or understands the relevance to life.
- Finding meaning in work performed contributes to the quality of life.
- The family is the foundation of our society with education as a shared responsibility of the individual, home, school, and community.
- Communication skills are essential for success.

DESIRED RESULTS FOR STUDENT LEARNING (DRSLs)

1. Lifelong Learning
 - Demonstrates a positive attitude and personal responsibility for learning and personal development
 - Uses appropriate strategies to identify and meet needs and goals
 - Uses reflection and feedback for self-evaluation
 - Uses efficient and effective information management strategies to relate information and experience
 - Applies technology to live, learn, and work successfully in an increasingly complex and information-rich society
 - Evaluates, interprets, organizes, and synthesizes information

2. Responsibility
 - Demonstrates integrity and dependability
 - Uses appropriate strategies to resolve conflicts
 - Recognizes how individual choices and actions affect self, family, and community
 - Accesses, analyzes, and uses resources to promote wellness
 - Balances work, person responsibilities, and leisure activities
 - Demonstrates respect for human dignity, needs, individual rights, and property
 - Works effectively with others, as leader or participant, to identify and achieve specified results
 - Identifies personal interests, abilities, and qualities of character that lead to a meaningful and productive career

3. Communication Skills
 - Selects modes of communication appropriate to the purpose; e.g., reading, writing, listening, speaking, dancing, acting, drawing, graphing, singing, playing musical instruments, and using technology
 - Communicates clearly in oral, artistic , written, and nonverbal ways
 - Communicate with others civilly and respectfully to work towards common goals
 - Adapts and adjusts communication to suit the needs of the intended audience

4. Thinking and Reasoning
 - Uses thinking processes to interpret information
 - Uses thinking processes in concrete and abstract ways
 - Organizes and manages information in new and unique ways
 - Predicts consequences when making decisions
 - Considers new ideas and various perspectives to broaden insight and increase understanding.

Date of visit: March 9-10, 2011

MEMBERS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Ben Lems, Canyons School District, Visiting Team Chairperson

Paula Evans, Tintic High School, Tintic School District

Matt King, Timberline Middle School, Alpine School District

Mark Mitchell, Alta High School, Canyons School District

VISITING TEAM REPORT

PAYSON HIGH SCHOOL

CHAPTER 1: SCHOOL PROFILE

Payson High School was first established in 1907 on the second floor of the Central School with the introduction of a ninth grade class. As the high school expanded into grades 10, 11, and 12, a new building was needed to accommodate the students. The new building was constructed in 1912. Since then, the community and school has seen a steadily increasing population and as a result, the need to continually expand its facilities. In 1939 the auditorium was extended, a new stage built, and a new library and several classrooms were added. By the mid 1960s, due to crowded conditions, voters approved a bond to construct a new high school. The new high school was completed in 1968. Expansion of the school has continued to present day. In recent years the fine arts wing has been expanded, the computer labs have been redesigned, and the main gym received a new floor. The auditorium has also been renovated, ungraded, and new seats added. In 2008, the new Salem Hills High School opened its doors which reduced the student enrollment at Payson High School by one third.

Many of Payson High School's students come from six small, rural, farming communities surrounding Payson, including Genola, Elberta, Spring Lake, Goshen, West Mountain, and Santaquin. Payson High School has a current enrollment of 1,034 students. The average class size is 26.8 students. Dailey average attendance is 91 percent. Twenty percent of the students qualify for fee waivers and approximately 50 percent receive free or reduced-price lunch. Payson High School has a minority population of 16.8 percent, the majority of whom are Hispanic. Payson High School employs 110 faculty and staff members composed of 57 full- and part-time teachers, three administrators, two counselors, and 48 support staff members.

Payson High School continues to struggle with a rapidly growing population and a low tax base. However, the school receives overwhelming support from local community members, volunteers, and businesses, who give a great deal of their time and financial resources to advance the goals and programs of the school.

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

- The school saw a need for increased technology to provide students with a better educational experience and efficient and effective instructional methods. This need was addressed through the acquisition of computers for each teacher, additional computer labs, classroom sets of iPads, and projectors and voice enhancement in every classroom.
- Payson High School offers a large variety of course options for students, including several AP and other accelerated programs and remedial options for struggling students.

- Data is shared with teachers and used to make instructional decisions through departmental collaboration.

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

- The Visiting Team recommends that the school include disaggregated data in its school profile.
- The Visiting Team recommends that the school include a more thorough analysis of its data and survey results in the school profile.
- The Visiting Team recommends that the school include a section explaining the progress the school has made on the recommendations from the previous accreditation visit.
- The Visiting Team recommends that the self-study include school-generated data to substantiate increases in student achievement and to help drive the decision-making process. A comparison of CRT scores with those of other schools with similar demographics as well as district and state averages would also be very helpful in evaluating instructional practices and their effectiveness.

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

The school has made an honest and sincere effort to accurately reflect its strengths and limitations in the self-study.

Suggested Areas for Further Inquiry:

- The Visiting Team recommends that the school continue its work to implement professional learning communities and best practices for staff collaboration.
- The Visiting Team recommends that the school evaluate its existing programs to ascertain whether or not the programs are yielding their desired results and contributing to improved student achievement.

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?*

Payson High School went through the process of reviewing its mission statement over the last year. In cooperation with stakeholders, the mission statement was revised to place greater emphasis on academic achievement. In preparation for the previous accreditation visit, the school identified and developed a set of four school-wide DRSLs, which are Lifelong Learning, Responsibility, Thinking and Reasoning, and Communication. Indicators have been established for each DRSL with little or no revision since the last visit, and it appears that there is no process to regularly review the DRSLs.

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

The mission and belief statements for the school are generally aligned with and support the school's DRSLs. The school mission statement reflects a focus on academic achievement, and the belief statements reflect the DRSLs by addressing the areas of responsibility, optimal learning, lifelong learning, and communication.

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

One of the recommendations of the previous accreditation team was that the school develop a means for assessing the DRSLs. At this time, however, there are no specific measures for assessing the DRSLs in the school. In speaking with administration and staff regarding the DRSLs, it appears that they are aware of them and believe that while, in most cases, DRSLs are not taught explicitly in the classroom, they are conveyed by implication.

The Visiting Team recommends that the school's emphasis be placed on explicitly teaching and assessing the DRSLs in every classroom. Means should be developed for collecting and analyzing individual student data on how well the DRSLs are being taught, understood and implemented in the school.

- 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 notes that the mission, beliefs and DRSLs do not appear to be evident in the culture of the school. The stakeholders at Payson High School recently had opportunity to revise the mission statement to reflect an emphasis on academic achievement. Posters with the mission and belief statements have been placed in most classrooms. The Visiting Team commends the school for these efforts. As noted previously, future efforts should be focused on explicitly teaching and institutionalizing the mission, beliefs and DRSLs in the school.

Curriculum:

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

Over the past few years, Payson High School has adopted a more collaborative approach to instruction in the school. The effects of these efforts are becoming apparent in the school culture. Time is set apart each week for teachers and departments to collaborate and develop a common curriculum and assessments. The curriculum for all classes is based on the Utah Core Curriculum. Improvements should be made, including explicitly teaching the DRSLs as part of the classroom curriculum.

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

Teachers emphasize using real-life situations to help students apply content. They engage students in problem solving and higher-order thinking through questioning, case studies, labs and other means.

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

Payson High School has been working to implement a collaborative model in which departments work together to develop curricula based on core standards. The school has posted the DRSLs in many classrooms, but at this point the faculty members are not focusing on the DRSLs as an explicit part of the curriculum. The Visiting Team recommends that the teaching staff work to make teaching and assessing the DRSLs a significant part of their curriculum development.

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

The Visiting Team commends the school on the fact that many departments in the school are either developing or using common assessments in their classes. These assessments are being analyzed to understand how well core concepts are being

taught and understood. This data is then used to reteach key concepts as well as to improve teaching for future lessons. The Visiting Team recommends that the administration and staff make an effort to disaggregate and use CRT data to help in identifying areas where improvement can be made. Suggestions include comparing school data to district and state averages as a basis for comparison and improvement.

Instruction:

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

It was evident to the Visiting Team that the teachers at Payson High School are designing and utilizing a variety of instructional strategies. The strategies throughout departments that actively engage students included lab exploration, open-ended questions, cooperative learning, role-plays and extensive use of technology throughout the school. While most teachers are effectively using these instructional strategies, the Visiting Team recommends that all teachers explore “best practices” that will enhance student learning.

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

It is evident to the Visiting Team that the staff at Payson High School has developed strategies that help students learn. However, the Visiting Team recognized the lack of identifiable and measurable goals concerning instruction in the DRSLs. It is recommended that Payson High School develop a smaller list of coherent DRSLs related to instruction and assessment. This list of DRSLs will provide the basis for building the capacity for explicit teaching in each classroom

- 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 quality instructional design focus group stated that “teachers use ideas found in Professional Learning Communities to improve student learning.” The Visiting Team found that the PLCs used by Payson High School assess the instructional needs of students and provide opportunities for teachers to develop and improve their instructional strategies. The Visiting Team recommends that Payson High School build the capacity of the PLCs for teachers to develop and improve their instructional strategies.

- 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?*

Payson High School recognized that it needed to provide opportunities for teachers to observe other teaching styles, in order to gather new ideas and to strengthen their own pedagogy. The Visiting Team recommends that Payson High School continue to foster and create opportunities for teachers to observe and develop additional skills to become proficient in their content areas and knowledgeable on effective approaches, and to reflect on their own practices.

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

Payson High School noted in the school self-study that teachers access technology, including LCD projectors, document cameras, sound enhancement, and Apple iPads, which are used to enrich curriculum. The Visiting Team commends Payson High School for its commitment to improving technology within the classroom and the school. The installation and procurement of technology has greatly improved since the last accreditation visit. This effective implementation of technology demonstrates the school's commitment for a well-defined plan for the integration of technology into instruction and assessments.

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 recognized that most assessments used at Payson High School are content-driven. Some faculty and departments have assessments that clearly articulate expectations for student achievement. The Science and Math Departments have competency-based assessments that clearly measure student learning.

At the time of the visit there were no school-wide assessments. Standardized and norm-referenced tests and State-Criterion Referenced Tests (CRTs) are the assessments used in multiple classrooms as well as a school-wide indicator of student achievement. It is the recommendation of the Visiting Team that Payson High School look at ways to create a school-wide assessment tool that could give additional indicators of student achievement.

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

The school uses standardized norm-referenced tests and state Criterion- Referenced Tests to assess individual and school-wide progress. These tests are fairly and equitably utilized throughout the school and classrooms. At the time of the visit, it was noted that individual teachers and departments were using different grading scales in each classroom. This creates the perception of inequity and unfairness

because each student is assessed on different scales in different classes. The Visiting Team recommends that Payson High School develop a common measure defined by individual and school-wide progress through a system of fair and equitable grading.

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

The professional staff uses data to assess the success of the school. However, it was noted that this was only occurring in individual departments, not on a school-wide basis. It was noted that the Counseling Department used a variety of assessment tools to develop data to assess the success of the school. It is the recommendation of the Visiting Team that Payson High School use the example of the Counseling Department and develop assessment tools that can assess the success of the school in achieving its academic expectations.

- 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 PLC model adopted by Payson High School and Nebo School District provides a common time for teacher collaboration. Teachers provided an example of how Nebo District uses this time to address a variety of instructional issues. It is the recommendation of the Visiting Team that Payson High School follow the example of the district and utilize PLC time to develop a broad range of student assessment strategies.

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

It was observed that the Payson High School self-study does not have a DRSL that effectively describes learning and assessment. It is recommended that Payson High School develop a DRSL that addresses specific learning objectives and assessments to measure school-wide progress, as well as a specific scoring tool on a school-wide basis to measure the 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 administration at Payson High School is highly regarded by the students, community and staff. The school leadership is focused on student learning. The staff noted that the administration does what it can to provide the resources and equipment needed for effective instruction. Examples were shared with the Visiting Team indicating that the administration had a strong desire to listen to teachers and develop plans that addressed their concerns. Furthermore, teachers feel that the administration is genuinely concerned about establishing a climate that is positive and fosters teaching and learning.

The development of professional learning communities (PLCs) within each department and across content areas has been implemented to provide a structure to encourage conversation about student learning and best instructional practices between teachers. The majority of the teachers the Visiting Team spoke with supported the PLC practice, even though departments had implemented the practice to varying degrees. Most teachers recognize the value of collaboration and are excited about the progress the school is making.

The school has made tremendous strides in the implementation of technology in the classroom. For example, there are computers, projectors, and sound enhancement systems in every classroom. There are several computer labs in the building as well as document cameras, classroom sets of iPads, and clickers.

- 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?*

During the last two or three years, through the implementation of PLCs, the school has made a concerted effort to focus on data-based decision making. The Visiting Team found the school leadership team to be committed to collaborative decision-making based on data, research, and observation. The School Community Council and PTSA also play a significant role in the decision-making process at the school. The Visiting Team determined that the school leadership team actively collects, monitors, and shares student achievement data with staff members. However, the primary source of data, as reported in the school profile and self-study, comes from ACT and CRT results. The Visiting Team recommends that other forms of summative and formative data also be considered when monitoring student achievement and instructional effectiveness. It is further recommended that departments and individual teachers use this data to drive instruction and to refine teaching and learning practices.

- 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 at Payson High School has been effective in creating a climate that provides for a safe and orderly learning environment for students. The school leadership provides skillful stewardship that aligns with the school goals, DRSLs, and school improvement. The leadership is respected and trusted by the stakeholder groups to make decisions regarding the allocation of resources in order to create an effective learning environment.

- 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 principal and leadership team of the school have provided opportunities for all stakeholders to have input on decisions made by the school. Teachers consistently let the Visiting Team know that they feel like they are listened to, and that their ideas and/or concerns are taken seriously.

The PTA and School Community Council have also been active in the decision-making process and provide a valuable resource for the school. All major decisions affecting the school are discussed with the PTA and Community Council before being implemented.

The Visiting Team recommends that the school, PTA, and School Community Council look for innovative ways to give everyone associated with the school opportunities for input.

- 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?*

Payson High School has made great strides in recognizing individual students. This was made easier during the past three years due to the loss of one-third of the school's student body to Salem Hills High School, which opened in 2008. However, there does not appear to be a formal system to make each student well-known by a staff member outside the traditional comprehensive guidance and teacher/student relationships. The Visiting Team, through conversations with students, was able to determine that students felt connected to and supported at school. Students expressed feeling comfortable with the idea of going to any member of the staff for help if necessary. They would not hesitate to go to the principal, counselor, teacher or any other member of the staff with a problem. The school leadership team has done a good job of creating a climate of support for all students. The school is encouraged to continue to work toward professional learning communities, where student advocacy is vital.

School Services:

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

Facilities and Finances:

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

CHAPTER 4: NORTHWEST SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT STANDARD

Culture of Continual Improvement:

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

The Visiting Team found evidence that Payson High School has completed the self-study school improvement process. There is evidence that stakeholders met in focus groups that involved parents, teachers, students, and staff. The focus groups also included members and leaders of the community. The extent to which the school has implemented the school improvement plan was difficult to measure.

Many teachers indicated that they were committed to sharing information, materials, and methods with each other. They have developed great trust within departments and collaborative groups. They have developed a very effective collaboration program that the majority of teachers feel have made them better, more effective teachers who want to help students learn. During collaboration time, teachers are able to do specific training within their subject. Teachers are able to create "mastery skill" tests collaboratively with their departments that can be used to assess student learning.

- 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 evidence that Payson High School is using collaboration time to discuss essential questions, which are: What do we want all students to know?

How will we know when they have learned it? What will we do when the students don't learn the material?

PLCs meet once each week to map curriculum, discuss goals, develop common assessments, and plan within their departments. Teachers feel that having the time to collaborate helps them to be more consistent within the departments. The staff members at Payson High School are passionate about professional development time. They also feel that they are supported by the district and can participate in professional development activities that help make them become better teachers. The teachers have all been learning about research-based strategies as a school and are reading a book together that they discuss during PLC time.

- 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 believes that there is sufficient commitment to the action plan from the teachers and staff. Teachers believe in the three goals which are: What do we want all students to learn? How will we know when they have learned it? What will we do if they don't learn it?

Although many of the action steps that are tied to the plan are things that Payson High School is already doing and has in place, they are not new ideas in the planning stages, but rather processes, procedures and structures that are already in place with the idea that they will simply be continued. The Visiting Team did not believe that there were many new ideas or steps written with the action plan that are different from what is already happening and in place within the school.

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

Payson High School has been provided with time for collaboration. The school receives support from the administration and from the district for this time. Collaboration time is protected and provided for the teachers in order to meet their needs. Through this collaboration time, teachers were able to create several new classes to help them meet the needs of students. Teachers feel that they receive support from the district to continually improve and create productive change. They are also paid to attend workshops and professional development.

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

The implementation and improvement of technology in the classroom was one element of the previous action plan that Payson High School has been working towards achieving. Adding collaboration time to the teacher's schedule has provided the professional development time needed to achieve this goal.

Beyond those two elements (technology and collaboration time), the Visiting Team found evidence that the action plan from six years ago has not been implemented to any great extent. There was no mention in the school's self-study of the previous action plan or what elements of that plan had been met. Many of the stakeholders were not even aware of what the previous action plan was. There has been some turnover within the administration over the last six years, and the Visiting Team felt that this might have been a factor.

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

One of the recommendations made by the previous Visiting Team was to examine the school's technology needs and increase the use of technology in the classroom. The Visiting Team saw evidence that technology had been integrated into the classroom. All classrooms have overhead projectors, audio enhancement systems, and document readers, and the school has several new computer labs, both mobile and stationary. There has also been an iPad lab integrated into the Science Department.

Another recommendation that was implemented by Payson High School was to provide time for collaboration. The staff has found collaboration time to be very useful and meaningful. Teachers love the collaboration time and have been effectively using it. For example, using collaboration time the staff has developed scope and sequence with their departments and classes. The Visiting Team recommends that the school develop a robust staff development program so that the time will continue to be used productively and efficiently.

The previous Visiting Team recommended that Payson High School collect and analyze data, and then use that data to drive decisions and instruction. The Visiting Team still believes that Payson High School needs to do more to use data to drive curriculum decisions. Although the Visiting Team was told by many members of the staff about how they use data within the school, the Visiting Team did not find evidence that data was used consistently throughout the school. In addition to using data to drive instruction, the Visiting Team recommends that data also be used to determine the value of a class and whether the class is meaningful enough to continue to offer it.

Another recommendation made by the previous Visiting Team was to take the necessary steps to create assessments to determine whether the DRSLs are being achieved on a school-wide basis. The Visiting Team did not find any evidence of this happening.

CHAPTER 5: COMMUNITY BUILDING

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

The Visiting Team found evidence that Payson High School does many things to foster and build working relationships within the school. Teachers use e-mails to communicate with parents, students, and staff. They are able to build strong relationships within the school during the collaboration time each week. The staff plans and participates in a monthly social at Payson High School. Many staff members and students are involved in the Latinos in Action club and develop close relationships while serving in the community. Students indicated that they are impressed with how hard the teachers work for them. Through the use of technology, staff members feel that they are able to increase their communication with each other and thus improve staff relationships.

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

The Visiting Team found evidence that the school is able to extend its community through many different means. The school has students who participate on the City Youth Council, and well as students who sit on the Youth School Board Committee. The faculty and staff at Payson High School are available for students before and after school. They also provide many tutoring options for students who seek extra help, such as a Math Lab. The Counseling Department provides “Window in the Workplace” for students to experience and learn about new career opportunities. The school provides a newsletter for parents, as well as articles written by students and staff that are published in the Payson Chronicle, the community newspaper. A new marquee has been put on the front of the school that announces upcoming events, school information, and information the community might like to know.

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

The Visiting Team believes that Payson High School has engaged the school community in a collaborative self-study. Teachers, parents, students, staff and community members were brought together to participate in focus groups, and departments worked together during collaboration time to evaluate their instructional effectiveness.

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

Payson High School's self-study was shared among the school staff and with the School Community Council and PTSA. It was also presented to the school board. The action plan is posted on the website and included in the school newsletter that is sent home several times during the school year.

CHAPTER 6: MAJOR COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Commendations:

- The Visiting Team commends the administration, faculty, and community for participating in this process of school improvement. It was evident that all stakeholders are committed to student achievement.
- The Visiting Team commends Payson High School for providing a positive, safe, and nurturing environment for students. Administrators, teachers, and other support staff members are perceived as being friendly, caring, and positive, and as taking a sincere interest in each student. Students like their teachers. They feel that their teachers are competent, have high expectations, and want them to succeed. Staff members are willing to make whatever accommodations are necessary to ensure success for every student.
- Staff members are very supportive of each other and work well together, as evidenced by their collaborative efforts. The Visiting Team commends the school for these efforts and encourages the school to continue to find ways to effectively collaborate within and across departments.
- The Visiting Team commends the district and school administration for providing staff members with opportunities to collaborate, share ideas, plan activities and receive needed resources, training, and instruction.
- The Visiting Team commends Payson High School for the use of technology in the classroom. The Visiting Team observed technology used in a variety of ways to enhance the effectiveness of instruction.
- The Visiting Team commends Payson High School for fostering positive relationships with patrons and the community at large. The Visiting Team also commends the PTA and School Community Council for the positive role they play in support of school programs.
- The custodial staff is to be commended for providing a clean and well maintained learning environment for students, teachers, and staff.

Recommendations:

- The Visiting Team recommends that Payson High School revisit the school's DRSLs and continue working toward institutionalizing at least one or two of the DRSLs so that they become part of the school culture. The school has made good progress in institutionalizing their Communication DRSL, but it has not yet become part of the culture of the school. The Visiting Team recommends that Payson High School make this goal a whole-school effort, and that the DRSLs be incorporated into each lesson plan and taught explicitly. The Visiting Team further recommends that the school revisit the indicators associated with each DRSL to ensure that they are written in measurable terms, and that an assessment tool be developed, such as a rubric for each indicator to assess to what extent the DRSLs are part of the knowledge and skills with which students leave Payson High School.
- The Visiting Team recommends that Payson High School review its action plan and refine the action steps in more specific terms, state the time line in terms of when the action step is to be implemented and/or completed, and state what the assessment tool or method of evaluation will be.
- The Visiting Team recommends that Payson High School do a comprehensive evaluation of its programs and resources to ensure that the basic needs of students are being met and that resources are being used in the most efficient and productive way possible to enhance overall student achievement.