

**The Report of the
Accreditation Visiting Team**

SUCCESS Academy
351 West University Blvd. SC #304
Cedar City, Utah 84720

April 1-2, 2009



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

SUCCESS Academy
351 W. University Blvd. SC #304
Cedar City, Utah 84720

April 1-2, 2009

UTAH STATE OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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FOREWORD

The major purpose of the accreditation process is to stimulate school growth and improvement so as to increase student achievement.

In these efforts, the school staff makes a comprehensive evaluation of the school's programs, operations, and results. The school determines how actual practices align to stated objectives and resulting outcomes. It is a three-phased evaluation: (1) self-evaluation, (2) on-site evaluation by an external team of educators, and (3) implementation using units of the evaluation to improve the school by effecting thoughtful change.

The evaluation, April 1-2, 2009, was conducted because of the school's desire to ensure quality education for all students in the school, and to increase student achievement.

The entire staff of SUCCESS 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 Vickie Wilson is also commended.

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

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

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State Superintendent
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SUCCESS ACADEMY
An Early College High School

ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF

School Administration

Vickie WilsonPrincipal/CEO

Counseling

John Tripp Academic Advisement & Counselor
Terry Moore Academic Advisement & Counselor
Brent Fackrell..... Academic Advisement & Counselor

Support Staff

Tammy Griffiths.....Administrative Asst. & Registrar

Faculty

Tyree Jensen-Blatt
Mike Clark

Ben Kaufman
Suzie Stoker

VISITING TEAM REPORT

SUCCESS Academy (Southern Utah Center for Computer, Engineering and Science Students)

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of SUCCESS Academy is to provide Southern Utah students with the academic expertise and skills to be successful in a rigorous Early College High School program and provide them with the lifelong learning skills necessary to actively contribute to our technical, scientific workplace and impact the world of the 21st Century with relevant and significant contributions.

BELIEF STATEMENTS

SUCCESS Academy believes:

- in establishing a culture of learning by providing programs and policies that enhance student achievement, accountability and responsibility through a variety of academic and aesthetic enrichment activities.
- in exploring and utilizing the most recent advances in technology to enhance curriculum, impact student achievement, and enable students to become leaders in science, technology, engineering and math careers.
- in providing students with a challenging and rigorous curriculum that fosters good communication and interpersonal skills.
- in providing a diverse population a personalized cohort-based learning environment that offers curricular options to meet the needs of all students.
- in inspiring students to understand themselves and others through tolerance, acceptance, respect, knowledge, and compassion.
- in providing students with a caring, clean, secure, and disciplined learning environment.

DESIRED RESULTS FOR STUDENT LEARNING (DRSLs)

1. SUCCESS Academy students will be *Independent Learners* who understand their strengths, abilities, and interests; who are capable of utilizing and adapting a variety of critical and creative thinking strategies to reason through and solve complex problems and who demonstrate the knowledge and skills to be successful in higher education courses and in the workplace.
2. SUCCESS Academy Students will be Resourceful *Thinkers* who use inquiry and technological skills to research, expand, apply and connect knowledge through scientific projects which extend beyond the scope of the classroom.
3. SUCCESS Academy students will be *Contributing Citizens* who through communication, and relevant academic and social activities, make positive impacts on society and the world around them.

Date of Visit: April 1-2, 2009

MEMBERS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Ted P. Lovato, Accreditation Consultant, Utah State Office of Education and
Northwest Association of Accredited Schools, Chairperson

Karen Bedont, Teacher, Lighthouse Learning Center, Carbon School District

Donald P. Link, Principal, Valley High School, Jordan School District

VISITING TEAM REPORT

SUCCESS ACADEMY (Southern Utah Center for Computer, Engineering and Science Students)

CHAPTER 1: SCHOOL PROFILE

SUCCESS Academy, an Early College High School, with campuses in Cedar City and St. George, is dedicated to providing high school students with increased opportunities to excel in math, science, engineering and computer technology and with the opportunity to earn an associate's degree or equivalent credits from Southern Utah University (Cedar City) or Dixie State College (St. George) as they earn their high school diploma. SUCCESS Academy was created in 2004 as a District Charter School, with Iron County School District serving as the chartering entity. The school, with five others throughout the state, was created as part of then Governor Michael Leavitt's 2002 initiative creating six High Tech High Schools. Start-up funding was received from a grant awarded to the State of Utah by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and administered by the Utah Partnership for Education.

Along with Iron County School District, Southern Utah University (SUU) and Dixie State College (DSC), SUCCESS Academy also shares a partnership with the Washington School District in St. George. As a result of these partnerships, students are afforded access to courses and programs at their boundary high schools for elective courses, athletics and social activities, thus leaving the focus of their core courses and university/college courses with SUCCESS Academy. Both SUCCESS Academy structures are located on the higher education partner campuses, with the administrative offices located at SUU.

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

- The economic status of the students at SUCCESS Academy is very similar to that of Iron County and Washington County School Districts overall.
- Currently, 19 percent of the students are considered economically disadvantaged, with 11 percent receiving free lunch and eight percent receiving reduced-price lunch (according to Federal Free and Reduced Lunch Program applications).
- SUCCESS Academy exceeds the local county percentages for minority student population, and currently enrolls an average of nine percent as compared to eight percent for Iron and Washington Counties overall.
- The first graduating class of 2008 consisted of 27 students at the SUU campus; of those graduates, 22 percent were first-generation college students.

- SUCCESS draws students from eight local high schools, with 51 percent being female and 49 percent male.
- SUCCESS Academy is unique because it is one of only a few rural Early College High Schools in the United States.
- Students' involvement with their home high school and the university/college environment are greatly beneficial to students of this age.
- Parental involvement—as leaders, volunteers, and concerned parents—is vital to the success of SUCCESS Academy.

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

SUCCESS Academy leaders must continue to show the academic progress of all cohort groups of students so planning, curriculum development, and varied instructional strategies can be instituted for the purpose of school-wide improvement.

SUCCESS Academy should track the entry and exit data of students to identify reasons why students succeed in the program while others leave without attaining the goals they had upon entering the program.

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

Being a fairly new and developing school, SUCCESS has encountered a variety of “growth challenges.” As a result, some expectations have not evolved as quickly as was desired. This has not deterred the determined group of leaders from looking forward and maintaining a strong vision for the progression of vital school programs and philosophies. The school's self-study did a good job of accurately gauging strengths and weaknesses of the overall program.

Suggested Areas for Further Inquiry:

- Develop pre- and post-assessment of students as a way to monitor the success and shortfalls of academic achievement in the various cohort groups.
- Develop a longitudinal study of students exiting the program in order to gauge the overall effectiveness of the program on a student's ability to become a contributing citizen (DRSL #3).

CHAPTER 2: NORTHWEST ASSOCIATION OF ACCREDITED SCHOOLS (NAAS) TEACHING AND LEARNING STANDARDS

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

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

From the beginning (August 2005), the Community Council of SUCCESS Academy has been functioning as a strong and viable group that has defined the vision of the school. The Council included a strong and visionary principal. The school's mission, beliefs, and DRSLs have evolved slowly, but with profound impact. The mission and beliefs are centered on Early High School concepts that emphasize rigorous academics and the cultivation of independent learning skills. The Community Council used the State of Utah's *Life Skills* document as a guide for developing the mission statement and the belief statements.

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

The Community Council and school administrators have spent the past three years (including the fall of the current school year) examining all of the profile data and refining the DRSLs and their accompanying goal statements to ensure that they accurately represent the mission of the school and the needs of students.

The leaders of SUCCESS Academy have done an excellent job of marketing the mission and beliefs and how they correspond with the DRSLs and the school's plan of action. Posters of high quality adorn many walls of SUCCESS Academy, at both the SUU and DSC facilities.

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

The Visiting Team was pleased to find that the indicators and measures developed in assessing the DRSLs are clear and forthright. All three DRSLs have three to four clearly written indicators showing what is expected of student outcomes.

For example, the Independent Learners DRSL states that students will:

1. Independently organize, plan and communicate ideas effectively
2. Master the use of all forms of communication
3. Use technology as an ethical form of communication

- 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 observed a school culture that reflects the commitment and passion of the entire staff for the students the school serves in a structure created and driven by the current mission, beliefs and desired results for student learning. The culture of the school is rooted in high expectations and demands a strong work ethic from all students and staff. There is a high degree of respect from the students to the staff and from the staff to the students. The students and staff realize they are part of a unique school environment that affords wonderful opportunities for personal and academic growth. Conversations with students, parents, community members, teachers, the secretary/registrar, and administrators were centered on the students and their needs, personal and academic achievements, and their potential.

The administration should continue to develop programs to integrate and socialize all students, since they come from eight different high schools.

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?*

Since the founding of the school in August, 2005, the School Community Council and administration used the State of Utah's *Life Skills* document as a guide for developing the mission statement and belief statements.

The Visiting Team observed that the staff at SUCCESS Academy works closely with the faculty at both Dixie State College and Southern Utah University. Due to the unique nature of curriculum for students at Success Academy, aligning to all of the Utah Core Curriculum is difficult. The curriculum taught by the faculty of Success Academy is aligned; however the curriculum taught by university/college faculty is aligned to the standards and requirements of the university/college. This arrangement presents a curriculum specifically designed to meet the needs of the advanced science/mathematics students attending SUCCESS Academy.

The Visiting Team also observed that the staff at SUCCESS Academy works collaboratively, to some extent, with the boundary schools. Teachers are invited to and attend district meetings with content area teachers. The curriculum is aligned as much as possible with those of the boundary schools, keeping in mind the advanced curriculum necessary for SUCCESS Academy students.

The curriculum reflects Utah Life Skills, as also evidenced in the school's mission and belief statements.

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

The Visiting Team observed a SUCCESS Academy curriculum that engages all students in inquiry, problem solving and higher-order thinking. The SUCCESS Academy curriculum is college-level curriculum. Included with these classes are labs and study periods where students can receive assistance through hands-on experimentation, research, and project presentations.

In addition, SUCCESS Academy students have access to college lab and research facilities where they can collaborate with undergraduate researchers and college professors.

Success Academy students have opportunities to participate in science and math fairs and competitions. School field trips provide students activities for further inquiry and problem solving.

- 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 observed that the teaching staff at SUCCESS Academy works collaboratively in support of the school DSRLs and focuses curriculum to develop the learning results stated. All classes support the development of independent learners due to the nature of the offered college classes. The curriculum demands resourcefulness and inquiry through the use of technological research skills to produce projects and presentations. The developed curriculum supports the development of contributing citizens as it prepares students for the completion of their college degree.

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

The Visiting Team observed, to some extent, the staff of SUCCESS Academy using assessments to drive instruction. Students are expected to pass the ACT and be eligible for admittance to Dixie State or Southern Utah University. The curriculum offered at Success Academy follows the outlined degree program at each university/college. Additionally, the CRS, PSAT, CPT, and SAT tests are given. Due to the nature of the early college experience, individual classroom assessments are determined by the classroom teacher or college professor. Depending upon the class, that assessment may or may not drive instruction, as SUCCESS Academy has no influence on the college curriculum.

The staff at SUCCESS Academy believes that all students can learn. SUCCESS Academy has a strong student mentoring program. Assessments are used as indicators of student achievement. As a student falls below the expected level of achievement (as indicated on curriculum assessments), the student receives additional tutoring after school and at community outreach centers.

SUCCESS Academy also prepares all students for success through its ninth grade summer camp and the after-school tutoring programs.

Instruction:

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

The Visiting Team observed a variety of instructional strategies being used to enhance student learning. Classroom teachers at SUCCESS Academy use different teaching methods such as the McKeague Math program, integrated technology, and hands-on lab experiences.

Student learning is also enhanced through early high school preparatory courses and the early college high school curriculum, which is aligned with the public and higher education partnerships, as well as through field trips and other educational opportunities.

- 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 observed the identified DRSLs on posters in each room at SUCCESS Academy – both campuses. The DRSLs are embedded in the curriculum due to the nature of the school itself. The explicit instruction of the DRSLs is accomplished through the school's comprehensive guidance program, strong academic advisement program, and student involvement in college-level classes.

The DRSLs are identified and explicitly taught in the classrooms at SUCCESS Academy; however, classes on the university or college campus follow the prescribed results from each institution of higher learning.

- 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 observed evidence that the teachers are participating in professional development programs that are improving instructional strategies and supporting student learning. Teachers are attending district workshops, online trainings, state workshops such as the Charter Schools BEST Practices workshop, and conferences such as those sponsored by the Utah Council of Teachers of Mathematics. Teachers are also members of national organizations such as the National Consortium of Specialized Secondary Students of Mathematics, Science, and Technology, and are encouraged to attend workshops and seminars available through Southern Utah University. It is evident that the leader of the school supports a strong professional development program.

- 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 identified that all teachers at SUCCESS Academy are highly qualified in the subject area they are teaching. The staff is relatively young, and is up-to-date in their knowledge of effective instructional approaches and teaching strategies. In addition to the staff of SUCCESS Academy, students are taught by university/college professors who are also highly qualified in their subject areas. During the student roundtable discussion with Visiting Team members, students expressed genuine caring and respect for their teachers.

Teachers at SUCCESS Academy meet regularly for collaboration and reflection.

- 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 observed the integration of technology into the curriculum and instruction at SUCCESS Academy. Computers are available for student use throughout the day, as well as in some classrooms. Teachers indicated that the administration has been eager to provide the necessary technology for quality instruction. The integration of technology into curriculum and instruction encourages the students at SUCCESS Academy to become resourceful thinkers.

In addition, online classes from the university/college are available to students and facilitated by SUCCESS Academy faculty. Assignments as well as assessments are accessed and completed via the computer.

Teachers at SUCCESS Academy use SMART technologies, digital SAMs, PowerSchool, UTIPS and other available technologies in their classrooms to challenge students as well as an additional credible source of information.

Assessment:

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

The Visiting Team observed that several different school-wide assessments are used to gather performance standard data. State CRTs, UBSCT as well as the ACT, PSAT, SAT scores, are used to focus expectations for student achievement.

Whereas each academic department has only one instructor, SUCCESS Academy teachers are able to articulate expectations for their individual classes. The teachers assess students on a regular basis. The college professors who are involved in the teaching of SUCCESS Academy students articulate expectations through their individual syllabi and assess accordingly.

- 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 observed that SUCCESS Academy has achieved AYP each year and continues to achieve academic expectations. SUCCESS Academy students are actively engaged in research-based coursework, internships with college and business partners, performance measured learning, and other college/university opportunities. The PSAT is used to measure individual and group growth from year to year.

The Visiting Team also observed the ability of students to graduate from both their boundary high school with their diploma and from their cooperating institution of higher learning with an associate's degree. This graduation data provides additional information to indicate the extent of school-wide and individual progress.

- 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 observed that SUCCESS Academy has a professional staff devoted to the success of the school and the success of each student meeting the school's academic expectations. The professional staff offers academic counseling, after-school tutoring sessions, study groups, and other programs to assess the academic gains of students and of the school. The professional staff reviews student and school data often to make informed decisions as to the needs of individual students and the school as a whole.

- 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 Visiting Team observed that the faculty at SUCCESS Academy participates with both district professional development programs and collaboration with the college professors who are teaching SUCCESS Academy students.

The SUCCESS Academy faculty has developed a broad range of student assessment strategies including, but not limited to lab experiments, online testing, individual and group projects, and presentations using technology.

Student assessments from classes presented by the university/college professors are set by the guidelines of the college/university. It was interesting to note that professors from both higher education institutions commented that oftentimes, SUCCESS Academy students were more motivated and successful than their regular college students.

- 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 believes that the identified DRSLs for SUCCESS Academy are engrained in the school's mission. The Visiting Team observed that the assessment of each identified DRSL is presented in the student achievement data for the school. The ability to pass classes at a rigorous pace at the college level indicates or assesses the independent learner, resourceful thinker, and contributing citizen. SUCCESS Academy faculty, staff, administration, and board members expressed complete organizational agreement on this data as a scoring tool.

CHAPTER 3: NAAS SUPPORT STANDARDS

Leadership and Organization:

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

The administrators of SUCCESS Academy operate according to the principle that it is their primary role to support teachers and promote high-quality instruction. The primary means of attaining this is through collaboration and support of professional development activities. Staff collaboration is done both formally and informally. The small staff size allows for regular and frequent contact such as at lunch meetings. Teachers report that the principal supports continuing education and promotes the idea of teachers gaining adjunct faculty status with the university. Teachers also work with the university faculty on a regular basis.

- 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 students at SUCCESS Academy are expected to achieve at a high level to maintain enrollment in the school. Grades given by teachers are monitored frequently to ensure that students are keeping up with the rigors of the program. Student progress is also monitored independently through annual administration of the PSAT. Other U-PASS measures are also employed—namely, CRTs and the UBSCT. Data is also utilized from ACT testing. Since teachers share the same students, they develop a familiarity with their skills and abilities that aids in academic decision-making. Indicators of School Quality (ISQ) survey data are used to examine school-wide issues.

- 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 learning environment seems to be especially well suited to the mission of the school. The recent relocation of the school to a remodeled facility on campus gives students proximity to college classes and resources, but keeps them in closer physical contact with teachers and other SUCCESS Academy students. The location of the school on the university campuses enhances the academic environment. Teachers report that the administration has provided strong financial support for resources that support instruction. The administration works to provide a safe learning environment. The structure and activities of the school appear consistently aligned with school goals and DRSLs.

- 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?*

SUCCESS Academy's administration maintains an "open door" policy, allowing contributions from faculty, students and patrons. Teachers reported that they feel they have been given opportunities to give input into school improvements. An example of this is the redesign of the university building where the school is now housed. Teachers had direct input in this process. The school has a functioning School Community Council, and advisory/focus groups help evaluate new programs and policies. Special events and activities such as the Night of Excellence help to build cohesion.

- 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?*

The school's academic advisors meet with students and parents at least yearly to review academic progress. The counselors also facilitate discussion between departments and instructors, track grades, and provide reports to students, teachers and parents. Students who have a grade falling below a "B" are considered at-risk and receive mentoring from teachers. The teachers share students and have collaborate frequently regarding student issues. Teachers run study groups before mid-term and final tests. Teachers also tutor students in an after-school program as part of their teaching contract.

School Services:

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

Facilities and Finances:

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

CHAPTER 4: NAAS SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT STANDARD

Culture of Continual Improvement:

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

It was evident to the Visiting Team that SUCCESS Academy is still evolving from its beginning in August 2004. Considering that it is still a "young" institution, it is amazing to see how established the school is in its mission, beliefs and implementation of an action plan centered in large part on the strong DRSLs. Much of the success of this evolution is due to the school leadership's commitment and knowledge of the *Collaborating for Student Achievement* model. The school self-study document is honest, well presented, and meaningful, and will be a strong guide in the development and implementation of its six-year action 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?*

As mentioned in the Instruction section, item (c), there is strong support from the school leader in supporting a strong professional development program which support the school's goals for improvement.

- 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 action plan for SUCCESS Academy was designed through a focused and thorough examination of all aspects of the school program and processes. The areas of strength and the areas needing improvement, as identified by the ISQ data, along with student data and the information gleaned from the focus groups, form the basis of the ever-evolving action plan.

The action plan is thorough and well thought out. It is evident the entire staff is involved with all of the action steps, their results, and the timeline and the assessment of each goal.

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

Being a new school, SUCCESS Academy is still evolving, and all staff members are engaged in supporting productive change and continuous improvement led by a strong, highly qualified, visionary leader. All key stakeholders realize they are part of a unique environment, one of the few rural Early College High Schools in the nation. The outstanding partnerships with local school districts, institutions of higher learning, and eight high schools present an unparalleled challenge and opportunity to become a truly exceptional school. It is the belief of the Visiting Team that the conditions exist to support the achievement of this remarkable challenge, and that these conditions are leading to a climate of continuous improvement on behalf of students.

CHAPTER 5: COMMUNITY BUILDING

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

Teachers report being very satisfied with the sense of community and purpose they share. When interviewed, all teachers mentioned being able to collaborate

formally and informally among themselves and with university faculty members. Even though students are aligned with their boundary high schools, they still seem to share a feeling of belonging to a unique learning community at SUCCESS Academy. DRSLs are well communicated and really seem to offer a common purpose among faculty and staff.

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

The school sends weekly e-mails to parents updating them on student assignments and school issues. Since most students also attend their boundary high school, attempts are made by SUCCESS Academy to communicate with these schools about important events. Since the school's inception, a student government and quarterly student activities have been added at each campus to help build a unique school identity

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

Evaluation of the school by stakeholders is accomplished through use of the Indicators of School Quality (ISQ) survey conducted by the Center for the School of the Future at Utah State University. In addition, during the 2008-09 school year graduating seniors and their parents were asked to respond to a survey that would reflect their degree of satisfaction with programs at the school.

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

Stakeholders in the school community are kept informed of school issues and involved in school improvement efforts through several means. The school has an active and involved Board of Trustees and School Community Council (SCC) that assist in evaluating and key policies and practices of the school. The SCC reviews the results of the evaluation and uses the information to formulate a school action plan. A newsletter is sent to keep stakeholders informed, and the SEOP process is used to communicate with parents and students regarding academic progress.

CHAPTER 6: MAJOR COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Commendations:

- The Visiting Team commends SUCCESS Academy for the dedicated, qualified, and caring professionals who are challenging students to become resourceful

thinkers and successful high school and college students. In addition, the Visiting Team commends SUCCESS Academy for creating a school culture that fosters a rigorous academic environment and provides students with the motivation to learn.

- The Visiting Team commends SUCCESS Academy for developing independent learners who understand their strengths, abilities, and interests, and are demonstrating the knowledge and skills to be successful in higher education courses and in the workplace.
- The Visiting Team commends SUCCESS Academy for its efforts in implementing the DRSLs. Students expressed a clear knowledge and understanding of the DRSLs and are aware of and understand the purpose and mission of the school.
- The Visiting Team commends the academic advisors for providing strong guidance and support to students in managing their individual academic programs.
- The Visiting Team commends SUCCESS Academy for its unique and successful working relationship with two institutions of higher learning in providing opportunities for collegiate level learning opportunities for its students.
- The Visiting Team commends SUCCESS Academy for establishing a cooperative working relationship with the local school districts, and their ability to accommodate boundary school extracurricular activities for the students.
- The Visiting Team commends SUCCESS Academy for establishing a strong and appropriate working relationship with the Board of Directors where roles are clearly defined, thus accommodating the establishment and administration of policy.
- The Visiting Team commends SUCCESS Academy for promoting ongoing collaboration among its teachers, and also with university/college faculties and faculties of the eight feeder high schools.
- The Visiting Team commends SUCCESS Academy for arranging experiential field trips for the students on both college campuses.
- The Visiting Team commends the administration of SUCCESS Academy for providing strong leadership in the following areas:
 - a. Developing and implementing a clear vision for the school.
 - b. Planning and overseeing the construction of the SUU campus facility.
 - c. Hiring, supervising, and supporting a staff capable of fulfilling the school's mission.

- d. Effectively managing finances, and thus ensuring the efficient operation of the school on both campuses.
- e. Providing resources supporting the purchase of supplies and higher-grade, cutting-edge technology.
- f. The student selection and identification process, as evidenced by the overall performance of the students in college-level courses. Students report a high level of satisfaction with SUCCESS Academy.

Recommendations:

- The Visiting Team recommends that SUCCESS Academy develop programs to better integrate the students, who come from eight different high schools, in order to create positive socialization opportunities.
- The Visiting Team recommends that SUCCESS Academy continue to show the academic progress of all cohort groups of students and utilize its valuable data to improve planning, curriculum development, and instructional strategies.
- The Visiting Team recommends that SUCCESS Academy obtain a registrar/ secretary at the Dixie State College campus to augment the management and recordkeeping capabilities necessary to the program.
- The Visiting Team recommends that SUCCESS Academy continue to improve communication with boundary schools so that all students receive pertinent information about the school.
- The Visiting Team recommends that SUCCESS Academy expand its collaborative network to the broader community so that a greater variety of parents become involved with the school.
- The Visiting Team recommends that SUCCESS Academy continue to identify reasons, with the collection of valid and reliable data, as to why students leave the program before attaining their goals.
- The Visiting Team recommends that SUCCESS Academy conduct a longitudinal study of students successfully exiting the program in order to gauge the overall effectiveness of the program on a student's ability to become a contributing citizen (DRSL #3).