The Report of the
Accreditation Visiting Team

Tooele High School

301 West Vine Street
Tooele, Utah 84074

March 7-8, 2012

Utah State Office of Education
250 East 500 South
P.O. Box 144200
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Tooele High School

301 West Vine Street
Tooele, Utah 84074

March 7-8, 2012

UTAH STATE OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword ii
Utah State Board of Education iii
Tooele County School District Board of Education and Administration 1
Tooele High School Administration and Staff 2
Tooele High School Mission Statement, Belief Statements, and DRSLs 4
Members of the Visiting Team 5
Visiting Team Report 6
Chapter 1: School Profile 6
    Suggested Areas for Further Inquiry 7
Chapter 2: Northwest Accreditation Commission (Northwest)
    Teaching and Learning Standards 7
    Mission, Beliefs and Desired Results for Student Learning (DRSLs) 7
    Curriculum 8
    Instruction 10
    Assessment 11
Chapter 3: Northwest Support Standards 12
    Leadership and Organization 12
    School Services 14
    Facilities and Finances 14
Chapter 4: Northwest School Improvement Standard 14
Chapter 5: Community Building 16
Chapter 6: Major Commendations and Recommendations of the Visiting Team 17

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 7-8, 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 Tooele 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 Bill Gochis is also commended.

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

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TOOELE HIGH SCHOOL

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Mat Jackson ..... Assistant Principal
Betsy Swynenburg ..... Assistant Principal

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Mary Murphy ..... Counselor
Randy Sneed ..... Counselor
John Anderson ..... Counselor
Candace Manley ..... Counselor

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Syra, Marilyn
Timothy, Shelley
Valdez, Cody
VanDerwerken, Ted
Waltzing, Angelique
Wilcox, Christopher
Wood, Bill
Workman, Dennis
Zeller, Anne

TOOELE HIGH SCHOOL

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Tooele High School is to empower all students to become productive citizens in an ever changing world through commitment to academic excellence and personal responsibility.

BELIEF STATEMENTS

At Tooele High school we believe:

- ◊ Students will receive quality teaching in every classroom every day.
- ◊ In providing a safe, inviting learning environment for the students.
- ◊ All students have the ability and opportunity to learn.
- ◊ In encouraging students to participate in clubs, extracurricular activities, and service projects to make them well-rounded.

DESIRED RESULTS FOR STUDENT LEARNING (DRSLs)

- ◊ **Communication**—Students will demonstrate the ability to use literacy, critical thinking, and effective writing and communication skills to build a successful future.

- ◊ **Employability**—Students will demonstrate career and college readiness by establishing and maintaining an educational plan that maximizes future options.

- ◊ **Thinking and Reasoning**—Students will be able to think critically, solve problems, and communicate in a collaborative setting.

Date of visit: March 7-8, 2012

MEMBERS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Glo Merrill, USOE Accreditation Specialist, Visiting Team Chairperson

Edith Bird, Jordan Applied Technology Center, Jordan School District

Jennifer Brimley, Daniels Academy

Rita Brock, Specialist, Utah State Office of Education

Sean Fitzgerald, Open High School of Utah, Charter School

VISITING TEAM REPORT

TOOELE HIGH SCHOOL

CHAPTER 1: SCHOOL PROFILE

Tooele High School was established in 1913. The school has a long tradition of excellence and is known for the strong CTE programs available to students. The current school building was finished in 2003, and enrollment grew to 2,273 before the new Stansbury High School opened and school boundaries were realigned.

There are currently 1,408 students enrolled in grades 9-12. The school offers a variety of programs for struggling learners, as well as honors, concurrent enrollment and Advanced Placement courses for the accelerated students. In addition, there are many extracurricular activities for students to participate in. The majority of students are Caucasian, with 11 percent being Hispanic, three percent African American, one percent American Indian and one percent Asian. Currently 38 percent of the students receive free or reduced-price lunch.

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

The school profile provided demographic data, information on behavior incidents, AYP reports, longitudinal CRT and ACT results, and parent and faculty survey results. However, much of the data was not disaggregated by gender, grade, or subgroup.

Achievement Academy data for the current school year was included along with CTE testing results for last year. The Visiting Team was disappointed that the school did not include any course, department, or school-wide DRSL data regarding the implementation of a DRSL.

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

The Visiting Team recommends that the school begin gathering disaggregated, longitudinal data for high-stakes testing (AP, ACT, NWEA), as well as course and school-wide Utah Writes data. The school offers several AP courses and should begin tracking enrollment, number of tests given, and pass rate for each year.

As Tooele High School establishes strategic, measurable goals, it is imperative that the school develop the means for collecting and analyzing individual student data to determine, by name, who is learning and who is not learning. Data results should drive updating of curriculum and instruction. **All** stakeholders should review data periodically to monitor the school’s progress.

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

The profile presented the school's strengths, but did not clearly identify who is and who is not learning at Tooele High School. It appears that the school has not established a comprehensive data collection system.

The largest achievement gap is between disabled and non-disabled students. At-risk freshmen are identified and given the opportunity to enroll in the summer Jump Start Program and the Achievement Academy. However, individual teachers and departments are not currently using high-stakes or school-level data to identify struggling students by name.

Suggested Areas for Further Inquiry:

- The Visiting Team recommends that Tooele High collect and disaggregate school-level data to make informed decisions regarding student learning. The school should continue to collect and disaggregate high-stakes assessment data. By generating longitudinal data charts, the school will be able to identify trends as well as achievement progress.

- Struggling learners need to be identified by name and appropriate academic interventions provided for the struggling students in grades 9-12.

- The Visiting Team recommends that Tooele High School clearly define measurable indicators for each school DRSL. Two DRSL indicators should be institutionalized before the next Visiting Team visit. The DRSL indicators should represent learning gaps at the school, and should be easily measurable, timely and achievable.

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 school's mission statement, beliefs, and DRSLs were revised by the administration and faculty members in August 2011. All stakeholders (i.e., students, parents, business partners, staff, faculty and administration) should revisit the mission, beliefs and DRSLs to ensure that all stakeholders have a voice in defining goals to improve learning at the school. As DRSL indicators are identified, the school's action plan will need to be updated.

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

The mission and beliefs of Tooele High School support the school's commitment to student learning. Last year, the English Department started using Utah Write software to help students improve their writing. Other departments are now using the software tool, which allows students and teachers to track progress.

The Visiting Team recommends that data from the Utah Write program be collected and analyzed to inform instruction. Data should be tracked by individual, classroom, course, and department, as well as school-wide.

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

Tooele High School has institutionalized the Communication DRSL through the use of the Utah Write program. The Utah Write program provides a personal history page for each student, keeping track of all practice tests taken, graphs depicting score progress, and a breakdown of time spent on tutorials. However, at the present time, data is not being collected nor analyzed to determine the effectiveness of the program.

The Visiting Team recommends that indicators for each DRSL be developed to guide the school improvement plan.

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?*

There is little evidence that the DRSLs currently guide the policies and decisions of the school. Every classroom in the school has a poster of the DRSLs, and students and faculty members are aware that the school has a goal to improve writing. Since the Communication DRSL was recently developed, there has been little time to collect and analyze longitudinal data regarding progress in student writing. The DRSL indicators have not been developed, so it is very difficult for students and faculty to clearly understand the intent of the DRSLs.

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?*

This is the first year that Tooele High School has had a late-start Monday schedule to provide time each week for PLCs to meet. For the previous two years, the PLCs met about once per month. The Math and English Departments are currently implementing the new Common Core, and other departments have unpacked core standards and horizontally aligned curricula.

The English and Social Studies departments are commended for initiating authentic cross-curricular projects.

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

Engaging **all** students in inquiry, problem-solving and higher-order thinking skills has not been a priority at Tooele High School. The Visiting Team recommends that the school review Bloom's Taxonomy and then evaluate the level of questioning currently practiced throughout the school.

PLCs should work together to design questions at the knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation levels that can be implemented as bell ringers, used in class discussions, or added to assessments. Through this process, students will gain a better understand the differentiation in questions and possibly improve results on high-stakes tests.

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 writing component of the Communication DRSL has been institutionalized since the last team visit. However, data has not been collected or analyzed to determine the effectiveness of the school-wide program. The English and Social Studies Departments are commended for using Utah Writes software as part of their curricula. Some teachers are struggling with defining "authentic" writing for their courses.

When the school includes indicators for the DRSLs, it will allow teachers, departments and the school to collect data to track improvement in students' performance. Although some departments have developed grading rubrics for writing assignments, there is not a school-wide tool to assess student progress.

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

There is little evidence that individual teachers, departments or the school is using assessment results to ensure that **all** students reach the intended learning outcomes. Classroom achievement data should be used to determine when re-teaching and re-testing of students is needed. PLC time should focus on designing common assessments and collecting data as individual teachers and as departments.

It would be helpful for students and parents if the school used a uniform grading scale. In addition, each department should bring student work to the table to ensure consistency and fairness in grading.

Instruction:

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

The Visiting Team observed teachers using a variety of instructional strategies (e.g., direct instruction, small groups and class discussion, student portfolios, projects, presentations, guided reading). Teachers were also observed providing individual help to students.

It may be helpful for the school to identify specific, research-based instructional strategies and provide professional development to all faculty members. Each PLC can monitor and refine the implementation of the strategy.

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 appears that the school does not have a formal professional development plan to develop and implement instructional strategies that are research-based. The Visiting Team commends the faculty for using the Utah Write software. Since the current focus is on writing, each PLC should determine how authentic writing will be assessed and graded for their department. Some departments may use a rubric focusing on content and conventions, while others may choose to assess all six traits.

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 recommends that the school develop a smaller school leadership team that could create short- and long-range goals for professional development. The school leadership team should determine the process to improve instruction by studying and implementing research-based instructional strategies. Data should be collected to determine the level of commitment and implementation by all faculty members. The school may consider using one of Marzano's books, *The Art and Science of Teaching* or *Classroom Instruction that Works,* to guide future professional development.

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?*

Many faculty members hold advanced degrees, and a large majority of teachers are highly qualified. Many faculty members expressed that they appreciate and value the PLC collaboration time. Through conversation, the Visiting Team discovered that some departments have brought consistency to the curriculum and have created common assessments in some courses. It appears that the faculty is very open to reading, discussing, and implementing research-based instructional strategies.

As common assessments are designed and implemented, faculty members can bring student work to the table and continue conversations regarding curriculum development, instruction and assessment of student knowledge. The school should ensure that faculty members formally and informally reflect upon their own practice.

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

Tooele High School offers a wide variety of technology for student and faculty use (e.g., student response clickers, tablets, document cameras, laptop computers, desktop computers, CTE equipment). There are several computer labs throughout the school, and the Math Department will soon have its own lab. The school may consider purchasing adaptive math software to track individual student progress. In addition, the school may want to expand student use of computers for research and writing by purchasing laptop carts that could be moved throughout the building.

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 school has not established a school-wide assessment to monitor student knowledge and understanding of the Communication DRSL. Some departments have started to collaborate on common assessments. The English and Social Studies Departments are using Utah Write, but are not using the data the software provides to update curriculum or improve instruction.

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

With the exception of the Math Department, each teacher at Tooele High School determines a grading scale for his/her own courses and how points are distributed for assignments, quizzes, and tests. The school should establish a common grading scale, and each department should bring student work to the table to ensure students will be graded fairly and equitably. When a student receives a B in a course, it should represent the same level of knowledge and understanding as a B in the same course taught by a different teacher.

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

At the present time, there is little evidence that individual teachers or the school regularly uses formative or summative data to be proactive in helping individual struggling

learners. As the school regularly collects, disaggregates and analyzes formative and summative data, it will become easier to identify its success in achieving academic goals.

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?*

At the present time, each department designs the professional development for its PLC month by month. The Visiting Team recommends that the school leadership team develop a professional development plan that would involve all faculty members. A single topic (curriculum development, research-based instruction, or creating reliable, valid assessments) should be studied and implemented, and data should be gathered school-wide. The faculty could come together occasionally to receive specific professional development, share positive results, or review data. However, the majority of collaboration time should be used by individual PLCs.

The Visiting Team recommends that the administrative team divide the departments and regularly visit PLCs to ensure that the professional development has a purpose and the school is moving forward together.

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

At the present time, the school does not use a school-wide scoring tool to assess the Communication DRSL.

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?*

There have been several changes in principals and assistant principals since the last visit. The current principal is a graduate of Tooele High School and understands the community and the traditions of the school. The principal is commended for uniting all stakeholders after the recent boundary realignment.

The administration is respected and trusted by all stakeholders and is commended for creating a very positive learning climate. Students, staff and faculty members are very proud of their school and know that the administration wants each student to succeed. The school has recently started several programs to give additional support to struggling learners.

The administration may consider working one on one with the faculty members who are struggling with classroom management.

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?*

There is little evidence that school data is being used to make educational decisions. The Visiting Team recommends that **all** stakeholders be involved in collecting and analyzing high-stakes and school data to monitor students' achievement and the instructional effectiveness of the faculty members.

The district has provided the resources to send administrators and faculty members to PLC Conferences, and the administration and faculty are committed to collaborating to improve student achievement.

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 administration is very effective in managing the organization and operations and allocating resources appropriately. The school is organized for student success and provides many opportunities for students to get involved in clubs, sports, the arts and other activities.

The Visiting Team recommends that a smaller school leadership team be created to monitor school goals, the school improvement plan, and professional development.

The disaggregated student responses from the ISQ survey would suggest that the school should review the current rewards and recognition students receive. The school may want to include **all** stakeholders in reviewing the current recognition programs and receive input regarding class, department, and school programs that could honor students in a variety of ways.

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

The School Community Council is active and appropriately uses Trust Land monies to improve student learning. However, all stakeholders are not currently involved in decisions related to improving student learning.

The business community is very involved in providing job sites for student internships. Parents support their students' participation in sports, the arts, and clubs. In addition,

many students are gaining leadership skills by leading sports teams, clubs, and other organizations.

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?*

Tooele High School does not have a formal mentoring program. However, the school provides the Achievement Academy and trackers for some struggling learners, and is currently considering adding an advisory period. Many Utah high schools have found advisory periods to be ineffective and have implemented a flex schedule to improve student achievement.

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 school has focused on writing in all curricula areas, but Tooele High School has not institutionalized a tool to measure individual student, course, department, or school-wide improvement. After interviews with teachers in each department, it is clear that there is support for the administration and individual willingness to participate in school improvement efforts.

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?*

Most administrators and many faculty members have been trained in the DuFour PLC model. This is the first year that departments have been able to meet weekly to collaborate for student success. However, there has not been a school-wide effort to focus on specific improvement goals. The Math Department is commended for implementing a common grading scale as well as creating some common assessments.

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 school did not define DRSLs until August 2011 and has not yet defined strategic, measurable indicators for the DRSLs. The current action plan was developed in October 2011 and each item on the action plan defines what the administration, teachers and counselors will do. There is no mention of what the students will need to do to improve student achievement at Tooele High School.

The Visiting Team recommends that the school leadership team develop an action plan focused on closing specific achievement gap(s).

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

There is ample evidence that the school is ripe for productive change to improve student knowledge and understanding of core standards. All stakeholders desire that Tooele High School maintain high expectations for student learning as well as the many traditions of the school.

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

There is evidence of some progress in implementing the action plan from six years ago. Like many schools, with each change in the school administration, the school redirects the focus of school improvement.

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

There is little evidence that the school has regularly reviewed or changed procedures to respond to the recommendations of the previous Visiting Team. The school should include **all** stakeholders in developing long-term and annual school improvement goals.

CHAPTER 5: COMMUNITY BUILDING

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

The Work-Based Learning Program in the CTE and Special Education Departments has amazing support from the business community in placing students in internships and job shadows. In addition, the community provides generous support for all school activities and sporting events.

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

At the present time parents and business partners have not been involved in reviewing achievement data or helping set school goals for improving student learning. By including business partners, parents, staff and students in the school improvement process, the school may receive relevant information to help improve student learning at Tooele High School.

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

The administration and faculty members were engaged in the self-study process. The School Community Council has been informed of school goals as well as achievement data, and approved the funding for Utah Write licenses for the school.

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

The school conducted the ISQ survey with parents, faculty and students. The findings were typical overall, and the results were almost identical to the previous ISQ survey. The School Leadership Team may want to carefully study the ISQ results and set a goal to improve in one or more areas. Also, at the present time, school improvement results have not been communicated to **all** stakeholders.

After interviews with parents, staff and faculty members, it is clear that the school needs to improve communication regarding SEOPs, policies and procedures, as well as information on student achievement. The Visiting Team recommends that the school resurrect the PTSA organization.

Tooele High School includes pertinent information on the school webpage. However, the school should consider using the phone system, e-mail, texting, and Facebook to keep parents informed. For example, if there were a lockdown at the school, how would all parents be notified in a reasonable amount of time?

CHAPTER 6: MAJOR COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Commendations:

- Tooele High School is commended for developing a positive learning climate where students feel welcome and safe. The school is also commended for initiating Achievement Academy, Jump Start, Welcome to the Herd, and other programs to help struggling learners.

- The Visiting Team commends the administration and teachers for their honesty and openness during the accreditation visit. The administration and faculty readily shared their achievements as well as areas that may need improvement. The administration is commended for gaining the trust and respect of all stakeholders after the difficult downsizing of the school.

- The Visiting Team commends the teachers for developing remarkably strong relationships with their students. Faculty members care about the students' success and are willing to give extra assistance before and after school. The teachers are also commended for their commitment to the PLC model.

- The CTE Department is commended for working with math teachers to integrate math concepts into the CTE curriculum. The English and Social Studies Departments are commended for designing authentic cross-curricular projects.

- The Visiting Team commends the Tooele support staff. The building is exceptionally clean, and it is obvious that the support staff knows the students by name. The support staff is very friendly and helps parents, students, and faculty members solve problems on a daily basis.

Recommendations:

- The Visiting Team recommends that **all** stakeholders (students, parents, business partners, staff, faculty, and administration) revisit the mission, beliefs and DRSLs. The school should clearly define measurable indicators for each DRSL and have two DRSL indicators institutionalized before the next accreditation visit. DRSL indicators need to be easily measured, timely and achievable. School-wide DRSL data needs to be collected and analyzed to determine who is learning and who is not learning at Tooele High School.

- The Visiting Team recommends that each department identify a proactive plan to re-teach and re-test students before they fail a course. Also, faculty members should continue to collaborate in their PLCs to improve student achievement. Each PLC should develop and implement common assessments. Course and department data should be collected and

analyzed to guide revision of curriculum, implementation of research-based instructional strategies, as well as track achievement progress.

- The Visiting Team recommends that the school decrease the size of the school leadership team. The school leadership team should develop a professional development plan with short-range and long-range goals. The action should be revised to focus on what students will need to do to improve learning at Tooele High School.

- The Visiting Team recommends that the administration improve communication with **all** stakeholders regarding student achievement, safety, school needs, and programs offered at the school.