

**Report of the
Accreditation Visiting Team**

**Cache High School
265 West 1400 North
Logan, Utah 84341**

March 8, 2005



Utah State Office of Education
250 East 500 South
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Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-4200

**THE REPORT OF THE
VISITING TEAM REVIEWING**

**Cache High School
265 West 1400 North
Logan, Utah 84341**

March 8, 2005

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 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, March 8, 2005, 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 Cache 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 J. Cody Dobson is also commended.

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

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State Superintendent
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CACHE HIGH SCHOOL
ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF

School Administration

J. Cody Dobson..... Principal

Counseling

Bobbie Cleave..... Counselor

Sarah Healy.....Counseling Intern

Support Staff

Susan Godfrey..... Secretary

Elizabeth Anderson..... Career Center Aide

Barbara HatchClassroom Aide

Dallas Leishman..... Custodian

Faculty

Gordon Bosworth

John Hart

Marie Larsen

Holli Redmond

Ron Stott

Craig Yeager

CACHE HIGH SCHOOL

MISSION STATEMENT

Cache High is dedicated to providing a safe, caring, and orderly environment. Our school community encourages success, responsibility, life-long learning, and service, as a progressive part of the global community.

To this end we provide individualized, competency-based, and direct instruction that allows and encourages students to be successful.

BELIEF STATEMENTS

- All students can succeed.
- Success results from planned effort, responsibility, and positive attitude
- Being a small school, Cache High provides a unique opportunity for a personalized education within a supportive and dynamic environment.
- That in respecting ourselves and one another, we honor the diverse histories and cultures of students, staff, and our world community.

MEMBERS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Ralph P. Vander Heide, Ph.D., Consultant in School Accreditation, Visiting Team
Chairperson

Shannon Rasmussen, Logan High School, Logan School District

Diane Wanamaker, Timpanogos High School, Alpine School District

VISITING TEAM REPORT

CACHE HIGH SCHOOL

CHAPTER 1: SCHOOL PROFILE

Cache High School is the district's alternative high school. The program began in 1991 to improve the teaching/learning process for selected students who were at serious risk of not graduating. The school serves approximately 100 students at any given time. High school counselors at Mountain Crest and Sky View refer students to Cache High. There are 50 positions for each school.

Facilities include the main building, which houses three classrooms, a computer lab, a career center, and offices; a double portable, which contains a science classroom and lab; and two additional portables that serve as classrooms. There is no cafeteria, auditorium, or gymnasium.

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

The staff at Cache High has done an impressive job of gathering pertinent data regarding their student demographics, student achievement, and perceptions of stakeholders. The demographic section especially illustrates that, though they work with a very mobile population, the staff members have a deep understanding of who their students are. The various sets of data that were collected for the profile have been analyzed and integrated to provide the "big picture" about the performance of Cache High School.

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

Because end-of-level testing seems to be Cache High's best opportunity to measure student achievement actually resulting from instruction here, those results should be not only tracked from year to year, but disaggregated for gender, ethnicity, etc. Comparing Cache High School's results to district and state results is also important.

Suggested Areas for Further Inquiry:

The Visiting Team has no suggestions at this time.

CHAPTER 2: THE SELF-STUDY PROCESS

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

Cache High School has put forth great effort to work with all stakeholders in this process. The Visiting Team recognizes that many parents are often apprehensive about getting involved with a school of this type. However, through interviews with the parents and the board, the Visiting Team found that parents are as involved with the accreditation process as can be expected, and are striving to make the process better. The Visiting Team learned that the parents and board meet as a group once a month to discuss the school's needs. These meetings address pertinent issues, and every effort is made to work as a team.

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

The staff is very forthright in recognizing weaknesses, and appears to be objective in identifying the school's strengths. The faculty and administration recognize the need for collaboration among departments and have made recommendations to work toward making cooperation a common goal for all departments. Survey data substantiates this effort made by the school-wide community. It appears to the Visiting Team that stakeholders are involved in a process of continuous improvement, and that each group of stakeholders is personally committed to the improvement of student learning.

CHAPTER 3: INSTRUCTIONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Cache High School's desired results for student learning (DRSLs) are not listed as such in the school's self-study. The school did not follow the requested format of showing alignment of profiling, beliefs and mission, and DRSLs (which should be formulated following the profiling). However, the faculty members jointly rated themselves on achievement of the six DRSLs outlined in the National Study of School Evaluation (NSSE) handbook, *School Improvement: Focusing on Student Performance*. The lowest rating they gave themselves was 1-2 on communication skills. The action plan does not align with the DRSLs, although in a sense this DRSL (communication) is included as part of the "language arts" goal in the action plan. In future self-studies the school needs to indicate in the action plan how specific DRSLs will be achieved. Also, DRSLs need to be identified and specifically named in the self-study, along with indicators that will determine achievement. The Visiting Team suggests that the school follow more strictly the guidelines and formatting suggested in the NSSE handbook.

Shared Vision, Beliefs, Mission, and Goals:

- a) *To what extent did the school facilitate a collaborative process to build a shared vision for the school (mission) that defines a compelling purpose and direction for the school?*

This is done to a great extent. All stakeholder groups with whom the Visiting Team spoke commended the collaboration that takes place at Cache High School. A consensus-building process has been established that involves the school community in defining the beliefs, mission, and goals of the school. The mission statement describes the purpose and direction for the school and reflects a focus on student learning as the top priority for the school. The beliefs and mission are aligned as are learning outcomes, which are stated throughout the self-study but not listed anywhere as school-wide DRSLs. The mission and belief statements are free of jargon. The school's belief statements address key issues pertinent to effective decision making and policy development. It appears that the implications of the school's commitment to acting upon the beliefs were fully considered prior to finalizing the list of beliefs. The mission and beliefs describe a compelling purpose and direction for the school.

- b) *To what extent has the school defined a set of beliefs that reflect the commitment of the administration and staff to support student achievement and success?*

This has been accomplished to a great extent. The beliefs, aligned with the mission statement, reflect a commitment to student learning as the top priority of the school.

- c) *To what extent do the school's mission and beliefs align to support the school's desired results for student learning (DRSLs)?*

See comments on DRSLs in section 3-a above.

Curriculum Development:

- a) *To what extent does the staff work collaboratively to ensure the curriculum is based on clearly defined standards and the Utah Core Curriculum (with inclusion of the Utah Life Skills)?*

As noted elsewhere in this report, the Visiting Team found that collaboration is an ongoing effort and that the curriculum is based on the required Utah and Northwest standards that address the diverse learning needs of the students. Furthermore, a process for evaluating the curriculum is in place in order to make sure it meets the needs of all students.

- b) *To what extent does the teaching staff work collaboratively to support the development of a curriculum that focuses on the school's desired results for student learning?*

The Visiting Team observed that the teaching staff evaluates the curriculum based on the student performance data and goals for the school at large. Student performance was a basis for evaluation, as was community input for the shared vision held by all stakeholders in the process, including teachers, students, parents and the community at large. The Visiting Team points out again, however, that specific DRSLs need to be formulated and subsequently achieved through a well-defined action plan. At present there is something of a “shotgun approach” in place.

Quality Instructional Design:

- a) *To what extent does the professional staff design and implement a variety of learning experiences that actively engage students?*

As reported by staff members, parents, and especially students, the professional staff goes to great lengths to provide a wide variety of learning experiences, which are aligned with goals and expectations.

- b) *To what extent does the professional staff employ a variety of instructional strategies to ensure the needs of different learners are met?*

At Cache High teachers don't teach classes, they teach students. While lectures and traditional worksheets are used, they are generously supplemented with hands-on projects, field trips, experiments, etc. That students feel their individual needs are being met is evidenced by comments such as, “Finally, I feel like I'm where I can really learn,” and “I'm not in competition with anyone else.”

- c) *To what extent do the professional staff and leadership provide additional opportunities which support student learning?*

Ample opportunities are provided for all students to succeed. For example, the fourth period individual study class provides time for remediation or for working individually on Electronic High School, PLATO, and other projects. In addition, some students who have reached competency in certain subjects strengthen their skills by tutoring others.

Quality Assessment Systems:

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

Because of the type and size of the school, assessments are directly linked to specific teacher instructional use, and student achievement is based on continuous improvement of the learning process. Student learning is clearly defined and effectively communicated to all parties involved. Assessment is both formative and summative.

- b) *To what extent are assessments of student learning developed using methods that reflect the intended purpose and performance standards?*

Students and parents expressed satisfaction with the variety of learning that the staff offers, and with efforts of the faculty to assess students' individual performance based on intended standards and individual student goals.

- c) *To what extent are assessments designed, developed, and used in a fair and equitable manner?*

Student assessments are designed using a method that reflects the intended performance standards, which eliminates any source of bias or distortion. Standards are established and shared with the students in advance, and are consistently applied on an equal basis for all students.

Leadership for School Improvement:

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

The school has established a strong and positive academic learning climate in which teaching and learning are actively supported. Students and staff members feel valued and important.

- b) *To what extent does the school leadership employ effective decision-making that is data-driven, research-based, and collaborative?*

The Visiting Team observed that the decision-making process at Cache is unquestionably collaborative. Progress is being made toward making that process more data-driven and research-based.

- c) *To what extent does the school leadership monitor progress in student achievement and instructional effectiveness through a comprehensive assessment system and continuous reflection?*

The leadership actively monitors the progress of students toward the goals of graduation and achievement of essential knowledge and skills. Weekly Steering Committee meetings are held in which individual student needs are discussed, as are assessment results and other pertinent issues and concerns.

- d) *To what extent does the school leadership provide skillful stewardship by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources of the school for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment?*

The Cache High School leadership effectively manages operational procedures consistent with the mission of the school. The principal has been an outstanding advocate within the district for securing FTEs and additional support staff. With administrative support, teachers have taken the initiative for writing grants to obtain additional resources for instructional materials, etc.

- e) *To what extent does the school leadership make decisions related to the allocation and use of resources which align with the school goals, the achievement of the DRSLs, and school improvement efforts?*

Decisions about resource allocation are made very collaboratively. Application of those resources toward achievement of the DRSLs will become more effective with improved articulation of the DRSLs.

- f) *To what extent does the school leadership empower the school community and encourage commitment, participation, collaboration, and shared responsibility for student learning?*

The school, under the principal's leadership, very actively engages parents and students as partners in the learning process.

- f) *To what extent does the school leadership empower the school community and encourage commitment, participation, collaboration, and shared responsibility for student learning?*

This is encouraged, within reason. Certainly every effort is made to make parents share responsibility for the academic success of their children. Parents are asked to meet with teachers, understand proper study procedures, be aware of any difficulties their children are experiencing, etc.

Community Building:

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

It was apparent to the Visiting Team that the community-building process is very productive and positive, with continued effort from all stakeholders. The school fosters and sustains a learning environment that both nurtures and provides a sense of belonging for each student who comes through the system. This was mentioned time after time in the sessions with parents, students, and community members.

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

Cache High School works hard to engage all members of the educational team, as well as parents and families, as partners in the students' learning process. Evidence has shown that networks of businesses, government agencies, and higher education have all had a stake in the school's collaborative effort for student success.

Culture of Continuous Improvement and Learning:

- a) *To what extent does the school build skills and the capacity for improvement through comprehensive and ongoing professional development programs focused on the school's goals for improvement?*

This is accomplished to the extent possible. The school district provides for in-service days. Teachers participate in self-development programs. Some, however, expressed strong interest in more subject matter-specific (or department area-specific) in-service training.

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

The school appears to be eager in its support of productive and positive change, and to work in collaboration with the district for such change. The Visiting Team perceived that the school sustains a commitment to continuous improvement and renewal.

CHAPTER 4: NORTHWEST ASSOCIATION OF ACCREDITED SCHOOLS (NAAS) STANDARDS I-XI

Standard I – Educational Program

Cache High School meets this standard. The State Core Curriculum is met, in alignment with the specific goals and learning outcomes of the school. The

educational program has been collaboratively developed. The school's instructional and organizational practices, as well as its policies and procedures, support the defined learning outcomes as understood at this time (see comments elsewhere on the DRSLs), and should prepare students for success in their post-high school endeavors.

Standard II – Student Personnel Services

This standard is met. Student personnel services are designed to give systematic assistance to students. One counselor serves approximately 100 students. The counselor is certified in counseling, special education, and English as a Second Language.

Standard III – School Plant and Equipment

The school plant provides for a variety of instructional activities and programs, and incorporates features that contribute to a positive educational atmosphere. The building, site, and equipment provide the physical environment to support the school's mission. However, all stakeholders refer to a need for expanded and more appropriate space. Members of the board report that they are working to alleviate this concern.

Standard IV – Library Media Program

The school library media program is a primary resource for literacy, information, and curriculum support. A certified library media teacher is on call from North Cache Center. This librarian has trained personnel at Cache High to provide instruction, resources, and activities to promote independent use of ideas and information.

Standard V – Records

This standard is met. Student records are maintained, handled, and protected in the best interest of students and parents. Students and parents have the right to access personal student records and are ensured privacy of such, as guaranteed by federal legislation.

Standard VI – School Improvement (This is addressed in the self-study.)

This standard is met. The school improvement plan focuses on the total school rather than each of the separate components within the school. However, future plans need to focus more on specific DRSLs that are aligned with the results of the school profiling and its mission and beliefs. (See also Chapter Three.)

Standard VII – Preparation of Personnel

This standard is met. All professional personnel are in compliance with the licensing requirements of the state of Utah and are properly endorsed for the subjects they are assigned, or they are properly exempted.

Standard VIII – Administration

This standard is met. The administration of Cache High School provides educational leadership, supervises and coordinates programs, and effectively carries out the necessary administrative procedures.

Standard IX – Teacher Load

This standard is met. The total number of students instructed by any one teacher in any one grading period does not exceed numbers set by the Utah State Office of Education and/or Northwest.

Standard X – Activities

This standard is met. Cache High School supports a range of activities that supplement the basic instructional program by providing additional interests and experiences for learning to take place.

Standard XI – Business Practices

This standard is met. The school is financially responsible. Proper budgetary procedures and generally accepted accounting principles are followed for all school funds. The school's advertising and promotional literature are completely truthful and ethical.

CHAPTER 5: SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT EFFORTS – ACTION PLAN

- a) *To what extent is the school-wide action plan adequate in addressing the critical areas for follow-up?*

The school's action plan is coordinated with objectives, dictates, and requirements of the school district. As noted elsewhere in this report, the present action plan is not directed at carrying out specific DRSLs selected by the school as an outgrowth of profiling. However, both short- and long-term goals are listed which are directly related to students' needs (such as science and language arts). The Visiting Team recommends that much more attention should be given to determining what persons are in charge of different parts of the plan, and to

deciding what, specifically, is needed to carry out the plan. The format of the present plan is very brief and does not conform to the suggested (more thorough and detailed) outline of the Utah accreditation process. The present plan does, however, address some critical areas for improvement of learning, which require follow-up action.

- b) *To what extent is there sufficient commitment to the action plan, school-wide and system-wide?*

It appears that there is school-wide commitment. It is emphasized again, however, that the plan needs significant changes as noted above. All stakeholders must collaborate to make the suggested changes to the action plan.

- c) *How sound does the follow-up process that the school intends to use for monitoring the accomplishments of the school-wide action plan appear to be?*

A better, more specific follow-up plan is needed, and the NSSE format should be used. (Note comments above in section 5-a.)

CHAPTER 6: MAJOR COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Commendations:

- The Visiting Team commends the faculty, administration, and board of education for being forthright, honest, and helpful while participating in discussions with the Visiting Team.
- The Visiting Team commends all school personnel for being hospitable and for sharing their school for a day with the Visiting Team.
- The Visiting Team commends all stakeholders for the several months of work involved in preparing the self-study.
- The Visiting Team commends the faculty and administration for establishing a “family-like” atmosphere at Cache High School.
- The Visiting Team commends the faculty members for working together cooperatively and amicably.
- Parents, students, board members, and others praised the school’s nurturing approach to teaching/learning.

- The Visiting Team commends the Cache School District Board of Education for seeking to improve the facility (see Recommendations below).
- The Visiting Team commends the faculty and administration for maintaining low class sizes.
- The Visiting Team commends Cache High School's students for displaying great pride in Cache High School, and for appreciating the nurturing help they are receiving.

Recommendations:

- The Visiting Team recommends that the School Board and district administration make a great effort to improve the physical plant in which Cache High School is housed. All stakeholders with whom the Visiting Team spoke indicated a need for improved or new facilities.
- The Visiting Team recommends that the school address, as soon as possible, the need for specific DRSLs in the self-study, and then address these DRSLs in the action plan as shown in the NSSE handbook, *School Improvement*.
- The Visiting Team recommends that all faculty members use assessment for both evaluation and improvement of instruction.