The Report of the
Accreditation Visiting Team

Carbon High School

750 East 400 North
Price, Utah 84501

April 23-24, 2009

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

THE REPORT OF THE
VISITING TEAM REVIEWING

Carbon High School

750 East 400 North
Price, Utah 84501

April 23-24, 2009

UTAH STATE OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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State Superintendent of Public Instruction

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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 23-24, 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 Carbon 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 Greg Stanfield is also commended.

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

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State Superintendent
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12/30/2008

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CARBON HIGH SCHOOL

ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF

School Administration

Greg Stanfield ..... Principal
Bruce Bean ..... Assistant Principal

Counseling

Rick Deaton ..... Head Counselor
Melissa Swenson ..... Counselor
Norma Townsend ..... Counselor

Support Staff

Carol Chiara ..... Media Coordinator

Faculty

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Terri Tubbs
Julia Vincent

CARBON HIGH SCHOOL

MISSION STATEMENT

It is the mission of Carbon High School to ensure high levels of learning for every student.

BELIEF STATEMENTS

Carbon High Believes:

- Through collaboration, teachers can ensure higher levels of learning for every student.
- Student performance can be elevated through an advanced level of expectations.
- Students can be made responsible for their educational success.
- School culture can impact self-confidence and learning.

DESIRED RESULTS FOR STUDENT LEARNING (DRSLs)

1. Responsible Citizen
2. Effective Communicator

Date of visit: April 23-24, 2009

MEMBERS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Stephen Jolley, Itineris Early College High School, Visiting Team Chairperson

Linda Wilberg, Emery High School, Emery School District

Chuck Brandt, Canyon View High School, Iron School District

VISITING TEAM REPORT

CARBON HIGH SCHOOL

CHAPTER 1: SCHOOL PROFILE

Carbon High School is located in Price, Utah, a rural, industrial/mining community approximately 125 miles southeast of Salt Lake City. Currently, Carbon High School has 704 students in grades 10 through 12, and the student population is approximately 82 percent Caucasian, 13 percent Hispanic, one percent African American, two percent Native American, one percent Asian, and one percent Pacific Islander. Thirty-two percent of the student body is eligible for the free or reduced-price lunch program. The school operates on an eight-period A/B block schedule offering the required State Core Curriculum, as well as AP courses, CTE courses, concurrent enrollment, and a credit recovery program. Carbon High School made AYP in 2007-08, after two years of not meeting the standard, by increasing its CRT performance by an average of five percent. The physical plant underwent several renovations beginning in 2002, including five additional classrooms (bringing the total to 50 classrooms), a computer lab, a second gymnasium, and a remodeled commons area. The school had a change of principal and assistant principal in the fall of 2007 at the same time as a change in the district administration occurred and a completely new school board came into being. The difficult economic times of recent years have had a significant impact on the school, as well as the community as a whole. Carbon High School has a cohesive faculty and staff, many of whom have been at Carbon High School for over ten years. The small community provides the ideal conditions for developing a “community of learning” with a strong emphasis on the involvement of the community, outside the school organization, viewed as essential for the school’s success.

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

The Visiting Team found the analysis of the school profile to be focused primarily on the “Carbon High School Strengths and Limitations” survey results. There were cursory efforts made to convey some of the profile information, but the reader was left with more questions than understanding (regarding, for example, declining enrollment and the impact on student learning of the ability to offer more curricular options). The profile revealed several areas of change: an increase in the number of students taking and passing the AP exams, a new attendance/tardy policy, and Academic Assistance and Advisement (AAA). The analysis of AAA, its purpose and early results, was one of the areas that could use more detail. If numbers of students failing before and after implementation were included in the analysis, it would give greater credence to the conclusions reached.

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

The Visiting Team would suggest a much more comprehensive analysis and synthesis of the data collected to frame the understanding of the school's strengths, limitations, and emerging issues. The analysis of the data contained in the school profile should guide the action plan by identifying the pertinent information and explaining how it has impacted/will impact student achievement. The data collected could also be broadened to include club and athletic participation, behavior referrals, attendance and tardy rates, support services, parent-teacher conference rates, funding, staffing ratios, enrollment in special programs (e.g., ELL, special education), etc.

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

The Visiting Team found the profile to be an accurate reflection of the school's current strengths and limitations; however, many of the strengths were not specifically analyzed to reveal the reasons why these areas were considered strengths. The student performance data was often simply reported, with little attempt to explain why the numbers were the way they were. If everything done in schools is done to improve student achievement, it would then make sense to give more attention to explaining the achievement data, even if no clear conclusions can be drawn.

Suggested Areas for Further Inquiry:

- Explore more varied sources of data to shape profile and understanding of school's effectiveness.
- Establish a formal analysis process used in evaluating data and shaping its meaning.
- Include Guiding Questions/Rubric.

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?

The Carbon High School leadership team changed the mission statement after the last site visit in 2002 and shortly before the interim visit in 2005 to more effectively guide the belief statements and DRSLs development. The Visiting Team determined the process of revision and development to be collaborative in nature and definitely

focused on "…every student." The school leadership must ensure that guiding documents (i.e., mission, beliefs, DRSLs) are annually reviewed using established school groups or newly formed focus groups. The mission and belief statements are the foundation of policies, procedures, guidelines, and practical decisions made to support all stakeholders in achieving the desired results for student learning.

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

The Visiting Team found the mission and belief statements to be aligned in support of the DRSLs; however, there could be an effort made to use more of the same vocabulary found in the DRSLs rubric to strengthen the alignment. The more similar the language/vocabulary used, the easier it becomes to understand the direction the organization is headed.

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

The Visiting Team found the rubric used to measure the school's progress toward assessing the DRSLs to be highly effective. The school leadership team needs to "institutionalize" the rubric. Every teacher, staff member, and administrator should be gathering data of some kind to help determine what level students are acquiring these skills. The self-reporting survey is one way to measure the school's progress, but there needs to be a greater variety ways to measure progress than just the survey. For example, teachers could report on late assignments, peer conflicts, class experiences with oral presentations, group presentations, organizing and planning, and use of technology; staff members could report on students being disrespectful, not following directions, disrespecting peers, and honesty; and administrators could report on attendance, tardiness, truancy, vandalism, drug and alcohol violations, etc.

d) *To what extent do the school's mission, beliefs, and DRSLs guide the procedures, policies and decisions of the school, and appear evident in the culture of the school?*

The Visiting Team found that the foundation documents (mission, beliefs, and DRSLs) definitely guide the school organization. The infancy of these guiding documents has some relation to any weakness that could be found. The school leadership team is committed to understanding the accreditation process, and in so doing will strengthen the connectedness of all school policies, procedures and decisions to these documents as the school moves forward.

Curriculum:

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

The Visiting Team found the standards for student learning to be clearly defined, rigorous, and appropriately challenging. The school, with the support of the district, continues to work on aligning the curriculum with the State Core. The Utah Life Skills document was used in the development of school-wide DRSLs; consequently, every teacher and every subject area is clearly tied to the Utah Life Skills document as the curriculum is planned, implemented, delivered, and assessed.

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

The Visiting Team determined the curriculum to be highly engaging and based on inquiry, problem solving, and critical thinking. The team was impressed with the way students were actively involved in the curriculum; most classrooms visited had students interacting with the curriculum through small group discussions, cooperative learning, projects, class discussions, oral reports, etc. Students definitely thought about the topic of the day/week/unit.

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 was made aware of numerous teachers and departments where collaboration was used on a regular basis, including collaboration with the junior high teachers. The school has developed a rubric for both DRSLs, but the team was not made aware of any specific content collaboration or cross-content collaboration to focus specifically on these school-wide goals.

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

The Visiting Team was not aware of any common assessments, except those used as placement tools for Algebra I and II and Geometry (developed by the district). Because of the infancy of these school-wide goals, it may have been too early to expect common assessments for measuring progress. However, this should be addressed early in the coming school year, perhaps with professional development focused on the “data to inform instruction” model.

Instruction:

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

The Visiting Team witnessed, in every class visited, a variety of instructional practices that engage the students in a variety of ways. There was attention given to different kinds of learners, time to think, higher-order questioning, cooperative

learning groups, pair share, peer tutoring, etc. The team commends the teachers' visiting on the effectiveness of their strategies to enhance the learning experience.

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 would conclude that the development of specific strategies to build capacity has not been addressed as of the site visit. The team suggests that the school administration address this issue early in the coming school year, perhaps with professional development focused on the "data to inform instruction" model.

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 determined that the school's professional development is often driven from the district level, addressing needs that may not be the most immediate for every classroom teacher. However, the implementation of professional learning communities (PLCs) and *Understanding By Design* are the ideal platform from which to address the instructional practices that can best support student learning and the established school-wide exit goals.

d) *To what extent are teachers proficient in their content area, knowledgeable about current research on effective instructional approaches, and reflective on their own practices?*

The Visiting Team found the classroom teachers to be exceptionally proficient in their content areas, with visible signs of the effective use of instructional strategies. It would appear that every opportunity to take advantage of professional development by the entire school organization is a welcome addition to teachers' toolboxes.

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

The Visiting Team found that one of the eight items to be addressed in the school action plan was, "Increase the use of technology and competence across the school community." Many of the action items under this topic are centered on access to information for parents and students; however, the plan does address teachers' use of technology in the classroom and the necessary support to make each teacher comfortable with the hardware and the process. In addition, a second item is planned to provide training for students, parents, and staff members to increase the working knowledge of technology. These training items are excellent attempts to balance the addition of new hardware and working knowledge to use it effectively.

Assessment:

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

The Visiting Team found the teachers to have developed classroom assessments with clearly articulated expectations. During classroom observations, several times during the discussion the teacher and various students referred to an upcoming assessment as expectations were referenced and student concerns with solving various types of problems were addressed. The classroom visits also provided a glimpse of the variety of assessments being used and many instances of differentiating to expectations.

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 concluded from the observations and data contained in the self-study that each department does an effective job at equitably analyzing individual student progress and uses state testing instruments to assess school-wide progress. However, there is a need to develop an in-house assessment tool to evaluate the school's progress toward achieving the desired results for student learning, as many of the objectives are not academic in nature.

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

The Visiting Team found the use of data to be more focused on standardized testing data, end-of-course data, and AP data. One of the team's recommendations is to broaden the school's understanding of data by conducting a "data inventory" to explore other indicators of student progress in addition to testing data. This indicator will need to be addressed before the interim visit.

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 determined that the school's professional development program has the necessary content to allow for collaboration on numerous topics, including assessment strategies. However, it is the recommendation of the team that the administration allow time to develop assessments/curriculum and not layer additional new conceptual material on top of the PLCs and *Understanding By Design* that were recently implemented. Don't put so much information into your professional development that teachers don't know where to start, and hence do nothing.

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

The Visiting Team found the school organization to have reached agreement on the use of a school-wide rubric for measuring school progress toward the school-wide goals for student learning. However, the Team did not find evidence of exactly how the implementation of this tool was or would be used. (There was no data or analysis of information gathered using the 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 school leadership at Carbon High School is very focused on student learning. The development of professional learning communities within each department and across content areas has proven to be very effective in providing a structure to encourage conversation about student learning and best instructional practices between teachers. Each teacher the Visiting Team spoke with wholeheartedly supported the PLCs practice, even though all had different reasons for their support. The climate in the school was very positive and certainly provided for an environment conducive to teaching and learning.

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 Visiting Team found the school leadership team to be committed to collaborative decision-making based on data, research, and/or observations. The school leadership welcomes to the table any stakeholder interested in the conversation at hand. There is still a need to expand the types of data used in making decisions, but the Visiting Team is convinced the school leadership team will continue to involve all stakeholders in the process.

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 Visiting Team found the school leadership to be skilled in the management of the organization. Whatever resource limitations there might have been were difficult to see in the daily operation of the school. The school leadership expressed a desire

to continue using focus groups as a school-wide practice to help steward the school with many more eyes on the overall objective.

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 Visiting Team concluded that the school leadership team is empowering the entire school community to share in the responsibility of all students' learning. The faculty and staff can engage in a number of different, meaningful roles that allow them input into the decision-making process. The only area that could be improved would be the addition of a classified staff member and a process to ensure this group is invited to participate.

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 Visiting Team observed the use of Academic Assistance and Advisement (AAA), a period once a week for students to meet with a faculty member to review their academic standing. This time also helps students feel connected with a faculty member and with other students of different grade levels, builds confidence, and provides guidance for those who are struggling. The time is used based on each individual student's needs; therefore, the school should personalize this one time of the week for just their needs. The data to support these general conclusions is not yet available, but will certainly be a concrete insight into the program's effectiveness after this first year.

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?*

The Visiting Team found an active effort to identify and address the areas for improvement to enhance student learning; however, this process seemed to be somewhat informal. The development of the action plan could provide for a more formal process of reviewing and revising, but must be supported with data and collaboration with the school organization. Everyone should know what the school improvement efforts are intended to change.

b) *To what extent does the school build skills and the capacity for improvement through an aligned and ongoing professional development plan focused on the school's goals for improvement?*

The Visiting Team found the school as well as the district to be committed to ongoing professional development that would support the collaborative nature needed for school improvement (i.e., professional learning communities, *Understanding By Design*). The school is just beginning to use these professional development experiences to frame the conversations in addressing the school's needs as outlined in the action plan.

c) *To what extent is the new/revised school-wide action plan adequate in addressing the critical areas for follow-up and is there sufficient commitment to the action plan, school-wide and system-wide?*

The Visiting Team found the action plan to be sufficient in addressing the critical areas suggested for follow-up. If anything, the plan may be too expansive; if effort is equally distributed among the eight identified areas of need, each having three to seven specific components, the plan may result in little if any significant change. The Visiting Team would suggest using any professional development time to allow teachers and staff members to use the skills already acquired to address the specific areas suggested for follow-up.

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

The Visiting Team found the school organization and especially the leadership team to be very supportive of productive change. The district, the community, the students, the teachers, the staff, and the administration are very interested in moving

the school in a positive direction; there is no hesitation or reluctance to do whatever needs doing to make the school great.

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

The Visiting Team found the action plan from the previous visit to be in the development stages; therefore, progress is hard to measure. The interim visit noted that the school had made significant progress toward reaching an understanding of the accreditation process, as well as ongoing teacher training in effective teaching strategies. In conclusion, it would appear that the school has made significant progress toward what was suggested at the interim visit.

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

The Visiting Team commends the school organization for its attempts and its positive results in addressing each of the items recommended by the interim Visiting Team. The only area still in need of concerted effort would be the use of data and data-driven instruction. This was one of the recommendations from the interim visit.

CHAPTER 5: COMMUNITY BUILDING

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

The Visiting Team saw evidence of a strong school community fostered by Carbon High's students, staff, administration, and parents. Each of these groups commented that there was a sense of safety, well-being, and trust at the school. The team found that people liked being at Carbon High School. The students felt the classes were personal and there was good communication with faculty and staff. There is a strong climate of community and pride demonstrated through student involvement, administrative support, parent connection, and staff dedication.

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

Carbon High has implemented a number of activities that support student learning. By providing one-on-one guidance, tutoring, remediation, and credit recovery through programs such as GEAR-UP, AAA, A+, and SEOP conferences, the administration and staff have created opportunities for every student.

Professional learning communities meet to collaborate and coordinate curricula, which has had a positive effect on core test scores. Parent-Link is regularly utilized to inform parents of important information and school activities, and the counseling office mails a monthly newsletter.

The administration and staff provide positive student recognition in addition to daily announcements and monthly assemblies. Student clubs and organizations are encouraged and supported. They provide interaction and service to school and community. The School Community Council meets monthly to discuss the school improvement plan and its implementation. There appears to be a positive connection between the local businesses and the school community.

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

This is one area the Visiting Team found to be weak. Though a self-study has been conducted, it focuses more on the faculty and programs than the students. The Visiting Team makes the following suggestions.

- Complete a new self-study using a larger percentage of students, including formal surveys. (The number of students should be greater than or equal to the number of adults.)
- Include students with varied interests, ethnicity, gender, economic levels, and scholastic abilities.
- Report AP test results by subject rather than grade.
- Use past UBSCT data to encourage remediation.
- Use past and current test data to place students in math and science classes.
- Have information/data on other types of assessments (i.e., CTE Skill Tests, UBSCT, competitions, and other performance tests with data available).

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

Items concerning Carbon High's school improvement plan are discussed on several levels—administrative, faculty, and School Community Council. Any issues specifically regarding School Trust Land Monies are presented to and ratified by the SCC. Many of the issues in the school improvement plan are discussed with the administration and faculty, and then SCC is informed and asks for their support. Items involving parents and the community are discussed with the SCC and reported back to the school personnel. The Visiting Team found the parents on the School Community Council to be very concerned and knowledgeable as to community and

school activities. The parents, along with other council members, make sure the information reaches all stakeholders through newsletters, Parent-Link, personal phone calls and word of mouth. The principal also makes a monthly address on the local radio station. The Visiting Team concludes that every effort is being made to inform and involve all the Carbon High stakeholders of what is occurring in their school community.

CHAPTER 6: MAJOR COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Commendations:

- The Visiting Team commends teachers for engaging instruction in every class visited.
- The Visiting Team commends the student body for the respect they show each other, teachers, staff, visitors, and the facility.
- The Visiting Team commends the teachers for creating classrooms that are a welcoming and stimulating learning environment.
- The Visiting Team commends the entire faculty, staff, and administration for their approachability by students, parents, community members, and visitors.
- The Visiting Team commends the entire school organization for creating a "community" feeling as the backdrop to student learning.
- The Visiting Team commends the new administration for its efforts to collectively involve all stakeholders in the decision-making process and the self-study.

Recommendations:

- The Visiting Team recommends that the school initiate and complete a data inventory of the available sources of information:
    - Assessment data
    - Skills data
    - Classroom performance data
    - Contest data/CTE, science fair, history fair, debate
    - Gender
    - Ethnicity
    - Attendance
    - Number of F's

    - Number of concurrent enrollment credits
    - Numbers on club participation
    - Numbers on athletic participation
    - Number of students receiving free and reduced-price lunch
    - Number of participants in service projects

- The Visiting Team recommends that the school and district administration provide the time necessary for the data work to be done. This work is important and cannot be effective without the time necessary to collect, determine value, disaggregate, analyze, and integrate the data into the school's action plan.

- The Visiting Team recommends that greater efforts be made by the school administration to solicit the opinions and feelings of all students, parents, and community members, not just those willingly involved.