EXCELLENCE BY DESIGN

A Report of the Visiting Team for Accreditation
by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools

COMMUNITY ACADEMY OF PHILADELPHIA
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA

May 3-6, 2016

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

The Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools is a non-governmental, nonprofit, peer-administered organization of diverse educational institutions committed to ensuring that students in accredited schools are receiving the highest quality education. Additionally, the Association seeks to ensure that accredited schools are engaged in continuous growth and improvement efforts through effective leadership, a comprehensive program of self-study, evaluation by peer educators external to the school, meeting the requirements for accreditation, exemplary programs, and supportive services. For more than 125 years, the Association has provided leadership in educational quality and school improvement for its member schools in the United States and around the world.

The school that is the subject of this report selected the *Excellence by Design (ExBD)* self-study and accreditation protocol. *ExBD* is an accreditation protocol that uses strategic planning as a vehicle for growth and improvement in student performance and in the school's capacity to effect that growth. The protocol, developed by the Middle States Association Commissions on Elementary and Secondary Schools (MSA-CESS), links various planning and school growth and improvement efforts. *Excellence by Design* leads the school to establish objectives for improving student performance and organizational capacity based on its vision of a preferred future for its students. Therefore, *Excellence by Design* is a future-oriented and visionary process. In addition, the protocol provides for a *continuous* review of programs and services and of the results of student performance. It also allows diverse constituent groups to participate in charting the future of the institution.

The purpose of *Excellence by Design* is to provide a framework and process to guide the school's efforts to achieve excellence in student performance and to achieve accreditation by the Middle States Association.

Excellence by Design also provides the framework for formally aligning all the work of the school to ensure that all of its efforts are coordinated and focused on achieving the school's mission. It is expected that this framework will accomplish the following purposes:
- Development of a sense of community and common purpose among the school's students and staff, and its community of stakeholders.
- A Plan for Growth and Improvement in student performance and the school's capacity to produce the levels of student performance expected by the school and its community of stakeholders.
- Greater cooperation between all of the school's stakeholders in identifying and implementing practices that have been demonstrated to lead to excellence in student performance and the organization's capacity to produce the desired levels of student performance.

Most importantly, this framework intends to develop in the school community of stakeholders an understanding that the school is part of a larger community of learners and that this community has agreed upon, supports, and accepts responsibility for assisting the school in achieving its Mission, Profile of Graduates, and Plan for Growth and Improvement in student performance and organizational capacity. This learning community understands that, by working together to articulate and align its efforts, it can achieve higher levels of excellence in student performance.

To be accredited through the *Excellence by Design* protocol, the school first must meet the 12 Middle States Association Standards for Accreditation. Second, the school, through a planning team of representatives from the school's community stakeholders, must identify areas of student performance that are the highest priorities for growth and improvement, measurable performance objectives, and a plan for achieving the objectives. The plan must also include the school's mission and the beliefs or core values that guide its decision making.

The Middle States Visiting Team is a group of professional educators appointed by the Middle States Association to visit the school. The purpose of the Team's visit is threefold. First, the Team determines whether the school meets the 12 Standards for Accreditation. Second, the Team determines if the school meets the requirements for a planning ethic and planning processes of the *Excellence by Design* protocol. Third, the Team reviews the content of the school's Plan for Growth and Improvement in student performance to determine the validity and clarity of the Plan together with the level of commitment to implementing the Plan and achieving its objectives expressed by the school's community of stakeholders.

NOTE TO THE READERS OF THIS REPORT

Readers of this report must be aware that the report is written, in part, as the Team's response to the school's self-study. Therefore, if readers need to see the specific information and data to which this Report responds, they should read the applicable section(s) of the Self-Study Document.

ORGANIZATION FOR GROWTH AND IMPROVEMENT

Introduction

A sound planning ethic and planning process are every bit as critical to achieving a school's goals for growth in student performance and the school's capacity to effect that growth as is a plan rich in content. An effective planning ethic and process address the essential question: "Does the school have the capacity, the will, and the systematic structures required to implement its plan and achieve its goals?" A fine plan full of great activities is only as strong as the ability and willingness of the school and its stakeholders to implement it.

While successful planning is reflective of an organization's context and culture, it should be visionary in describing what an organization wants to become and pragmatic in specifying the steps to reach that goal. Successful planning for growth and change has been described as a delicate balance between brave steps forward and reassuring steps to the side; between the recognition of the need for growth and a celebration of what already exists that is good, steady, and/or certain; between the bold, frequently scary, visions of future possibilities and the comfort with past and present successes.

When an institution seeks accreditation using the *Excellence by Design* protocol, it must commit to working toward establishing and maintaining a planning ethic within the school. A planning ethic means that planning for growth and improvement becomes part of what the school and its stakeholders do as much as providing programs, teaching, resources, services, and activities. A planning ethic requires continuous clarification of the school's unique mission, beliefs, profile of graduates, and student performance objectives. It requires that all of its processes are vision-driven. And it requires that the school is action-oriented by developing long-term strategic action plans that integrate programs, services, facilities, and support to address the school's growth needs.

In the *Excellence by Design* protocol, the school also makes a commitment to continuous growth and improvement. The school and its stakeholders should demonstrate that they are never satisfied with the status quo in terms of student performance, but are striving constantly to improve that performance. The setting and striving to achieve challenging growth goals should become a dynamic process in which the school develops the flexibility to revise and modify its plans to achieve its goals based on the results received from implementing those plans. As part of the accreditation process, the school should review the results of its efforts at least annually and willingly open its processes and results to review by its peers in the Middle States Association.

It is also essential for the school to commit to involving its stakeholders in meaningful ways in the setting of goals, developing plans to achieve and measure those goals, and the

implementation of those plans. In a planning culture, the school strives to develop broad ownership of the planning process and the plan for growth and improvement by the entire community by ensuring broad based knowledge and understanding of and support for the goals and the plans to achieve them.

In this section of its report, the Visiting Team provides observations and recommendations regarding the school's Organization for Growth and Improvement based on what was seen and heard during the Team's visit to the school.

Leadership for Growth and Improvement

The primary role of the leadership and governing body of the school—those in positions of authority and influence within the school—in the school improvement process is to serve as the "champions" for developing a planning ethic and the growth and improvement process. Strategic planning experts have long held that champions are extremely important to the success of planning for growth and improvement in any organization. Because the a major goal of the self-study and accreditation process is to ensure that the school has a vision and a plan to achieve the vision that is accepted and supported by all, leaders must communicate publicly, clearly, and often that:

● the planning process is important for the future of the school and its students, and
● they will provide the leadership, resources, and support needed to make the process and the plan successful.

This critical role for leaders also applies to the heads and governing bodies of larger organizations of which the school may be a part. It is very difficult for an individual school within a larger system to plan strategically for improving student performance without the clear support and assistance of it parent organization. They, too, must "champion the cause."

It is also important for the head of the school and at least one representative of the governing body to serve, when appropriate, on the Planning Team. However, in this role, the leaders should serve as "equals among equals" by serving on the Team as members with the same authority and influence as all other members of the Team. This is often a difficult role to take, because education organizations are typically organized as hierarchies, and the leaders are often expected to make the decisions in a "top down" manner. However, if the goal is to identify a mission and plan to achieve it that is "owned" by all the stakeholders of the school, the mission and plan must be developed through a grass roots level—bottom up, rather than top down.

A.   Internal Coordinators

A required component of the protocol is the appointment of a team of Internal Coordinators. The primary functions of the Internal Coordinators are to:
- Coordinate the school's planning process and development of a plan for growth in student performance.
- Oversee planning and preparation for the Visiting Team.
- Prepare for the Mid-Term report
- Provide the energy, enthusiasm, and expertise to move the process forward.

The Visiting Team observed:

Ms. McCluskey and Ms. Kibler were outstanding Internal Coordinators, as was evident in the manner in which the self-study was planned and carried out, in the collegial approach that they fostered among all members of the staff during the accreditation process, and in their organization of the plan and logistics of the team visit
While each aspect of the self-study was overseen and managed by the Internal Coordinators, appropriately selected and enthusiastic teams of staff members developed each section.
The Coordinators will serve in similar roles as the Plan for Growth and Improvement is implemented.

The Visiting Team recommends that:

The school continue to pursue excellence through its action plans under the direction of Ms. McCluskey and Ms. Kibler

B.   The Planning Team

A major commitment the school makes when seeking accreditation is to include a varied spectrum of the school's stakeholders in the process of continually defining a preferred vision, in developing the means to get closer to that vision, and in implementing the action plans developed by these stakeholders. In summary, it is expected that the Planning Team will be given the authority, resources, and support to:

- Develop the vision for the school by creating or reaffirming a statement of mission
- Develop a set of beliefs to serve as the ethical code for the institution
- Develop a profile of the knowledge, skills, and qualities the institution expects of its graduates.

- Identify the areas of student performance that are the priorities for growth and improvement
- Oversee development of the action plans to achieve the performance objectives
- Monitor implementation of the action plans
- Conduct a periodic review of the progress being made to achieving the objectives

The protocol requires that the Planning Team includes a varied spectrum of the school's community of stakeholders. Because Middle States' member institutions are so varied in type and situation, Middle States does not prescribe what groups constitute a school's stakeholders. This is a local decision. However, the school's leadership and the Planning Team will be expected to provide a rationale for the composition of the Planning Team.

Because the school is committing itself to developing a planning ethic and a culture of continuous improvement, the Planning Team should be institutionalized. The institution must find ways to integrate the work of the Planning Team into the culture of the school and the work of the school. In most cases, this will require a concerted effort and the opening to examination of how the institution thinks about institutional growth and improvement and who is responsible to lead it.

The Visiting Team observed:

The Planning Team functioned collegially as they completed the difficult task of assembling the self-study

The team included, at various times, parents and students, in addition to many members of the school staff and administration

Various teams are in place to carry out the action plans as described in the Plan for Growth and Improvement

The Visiting Team recommends that:

The school continue on its path to growth and improvement by following through on the action plans it has put forward

C.   Role of the School's Leadership and Governance

It is a school's formal leaders—those in positions of authority and influence within the school—who should serve as the primary "champions" for the planning process and the Plan for Growth and Improvement. Strategic planning experts have long held that champions are extremely important to the success of planning. Because a goal of the self-study and accreditation process

is to develop a vision and a plan to achieve it that is accepted and supported by the entire community of the school, the school's leaders and governing body must communicate clearly and often that this process is important for the future of the school and its students, and that they will provide the leadership, resources, and support needed to make the process and the plan successful.

The Visiting Team observed:

The school leadership and Board of Trustees were actively involved in the self-study process and were fully supportive of the actions that were taken and the plans that were developed

The Visiting Team recommends that:

The Coordinators and Planning team remain active in carrying out the school's action plans
The Board of Trustees be updated about the progress being made in achieving the schools action plans on a regular basis

D.   The Plan for Institutionalizing a Planning Ethic

A sound planning ethic is critical to achieving the school's mission, its objectives for growth and improvement in student performance and organizational capacity, and to its capacity to effect the intended growth. An effective planning ethic addresses the essential question: "Does the school and its community of stakeholders have the capacity, the will, and the systematic structures and processes required to develop and implement its plan and achieve its objectives?" A fine plan full of great activities is only as strong as the ability and willingness of the school and its stakeholders to implement it.

While successful planning is reflective of the school's context and culture, it should be visionary in describing what the school and its stakeholder community want for their students and pragmatic in specifying the steps to reach that goal. Successful planning for growth and improvement has been described as a delicate balance between brave steps forward and reassuring steps to the side; between the recognition of the need for growth and a celebration of what already exists that is good, steady, and/or certain; between the bold, frequently scary, visions of future possibilities and the comfort with past and present successes.

When a school seeks accreditation using the *Excellence by Design* protocol, it must commit to working toward establishing and sustaining a planning ethic within the school. A planning ethic means that planning for growth and improvement becomes part of what the school and its community of stakeholders do as much as teaching, and providing programs, resources,

services, and activities. A planning ethic requires continuous clarification of the community's unique mission, beliefs, profile of graduates, and student and organizational performance goals. It requires that all of its processes are vision-driven. And it requires that the community is action-oriented by developing and implementing long-term, strategic action plans that integrate programs, services, facilities, and support to address the school's growth objectives.

In the *Excellence by Design* protocol, the school also makes a commitment to continuous growth and improvement. The school and its stakeholders should demonstrate that they are never satisfied with the status quo in terms of how their students perform but are striving constantly to improve the levels of performance. The setting of and striving to achieve challenging growth objectives should become a dynamic process in which the school develops the flexibility to revise and modify its plans to achieve its objectives based on the results received from implementing those plans. As part of the accreditation process, the school must review the results of its efforts periodically and open its processes and results willingly to review by its peers in the Middle States Association.

A planning ethic also requires the school to commit to involving its stakeholders in meaningful ways in the setting of objectives, developing plans to achieve and measure those objectives, and the implementation of those plans. In a planning culture, the school strives to develop broad ownership of both the planning process and the Plan for Growth and Improvement by the entire community by ensuring broad based knowledge and understanding of and support for the objectives and the plans to achieve them.

A planning ethic that provides significant roles for the stakeholders of the school also has the effect of sharing among the stakeholders responsibility for the success of any planning for growth and improvement. *Excellence by Design* builds such roles and responsibilities into the self-study and planning processes. Therefore, if implemented faithfully, *Excellence by Design* can provide the school with the vehicle it needs to build sustainability into its planning for growth and improvement, because ownership of and responsibility for the success of the planning process and the plan for growth and improvement no longer rest with one person (the head of the school) but with all of the school's stakeholders.

The Visiting Team observed:

All components of the school community are united in their support for the planning process
The action plans include well-thought through indicators or success, with the expectation of frequent status updates

The Visiting Team recommends that:

A schedule for status updates be established

The school develop a plan for celebrating successes, and sharing the good news on the school website

E.   The Plan for Communication and Awareness

An important factor in increasing the likelihood that a school will achieve the goals it has set in its Plan for Growth and Improvement is to ensure broad ownership of the planning process and the Plan for Growth and Improvement across the entire school and its stakeholder community. This is accomplished by ensuring broad based knowledge and understanding of and support for the school's performance objectives and the plans to achieve them.

Therefore, an important element of the planning process is communicating with the school's staff, students, governing board, and other stakeholders to ensure they are aware of the requirements of the *Excellence by Design* protocol, the school's planning process, Mission, objectives, action plans and, eventually, its accomplishments as it implements its plan. The communication process should include means for obtaining from the members of the school's stakeholder community input and feedback regarding the products of the planning process (i.e., mission, objectives, action plans). Stakeholders cannot support and take ownership in what the school is doing unless they first know about it and are invited to join in the process.

The primary purpose of communication is to develop a critical mass within the school's community of stakeholders with knowledge about, understanding of, and support for the planning process and the Plan for Growth and Improvement in student learning and the organization's capacity to produce learning at the level expected.

The Visiting Team observed:

The school is aware of the need to keep all stakeholders informed
Surveys are planned to determine teacher's views
More student and parent friendly communication materials are in the planning stages

The Visiting Team recommends that:

The school use not only social media but also print materials to keep stakeholders informed

F.   The Plan for Periodic Reviews of the Plan for Growth and Improvement

In order to institutionalize a planning ethic, continuous growth and improvement in student and organizational performance must become a way of life within the school. It must be an ongoing, dynamic, and "evergreen" process. It is expected and required that the Plan for Growth and Improvement that is developed and presented for accreditation will be implemented faithfully over the length of the accreditation term.

Consequently, *it should be anticipated, and it should be expected* that implementing the activities of the action plans and gathering the results of the assessments used to measure the student and organizational performance objectives will indicate there is a need to revise the action plans regularly based on what is working and what is not.

Therefore, the *Excellence by Design* protocol includes the requirement that the school conducts formal reviews of the action plans and the progress being made toward achieving the performance objectives and that reviews are conducted periodically but, as a minimum, at least once annually.

The Visiting Team observed:

A strong commitment on the part of all of the school stakeholders to the plans that have been put in place
The action plans include frequent status and progress reviews
Teams have been named to carry out the action plans

The Visiting Team recommends that:

The school maintain the momentum that has built during the Middle States accreditation process as it moves ahead to carry out its action plans

THE PROFILE OF THE SCHOOL

The Profile of the School describes the school and the context in which the school exists and does its work. It presents a portrait of the school's community(ies) and the "distinctive personality" and the unique characteristics of the school. The Profile presents contextual information that establishes a "developmental snapshot" of where the school is in its efforts to achieve its Mission and to ensure the highest levels of student performance.

The Profile of the School includes information and data that describe the school and the context in which the school exists. The Profile also helps the school and its community of stakeholders understand the school's Mission, and describes the opportunities for and challenges to the school as it seeks to achieve its Mission. The Profile includes descriptions of the:

- Community, its schools, and its traditions;
- History of the school;
- Social and economic characteristics of the community, its constituencies, and its schools;
- Climate for teaching and learning in the school;
- Number and qualifications of the professional and support staffs; and,
- Number and characteristics of the student population

The data and information contained in the Profile of the School are not evaluated by the Visiting Team. Instead, the Profile serves two purposes:

- To ensure that the members of the Planning Team have a common knowledge base about the history and current status of the school in those areas on which the accreditation of the school will focus; and
- To "introduce" members of the Visiting Team to the school, and as such, the Profile provides one of the lenses through which Team members will view and evaluate the school. Thus, the Profile section should provide sufficient information about the school and its students' performance to build and enhance Team members' awareness and understanding of the total milieu in which the school exists and operates.

Readers of this report are advised to read it in conjunction with the Self-Study Document prepared by the school. The Self-Study Document provides the information and data the Visiting Team uses as the starting point for its evaluation of the school. Therefore, not all of the details included in the Self-Study Document are repeated in the Team's report.

THE VISITING TEAM'S OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS – PROFILE OF THE SCHOOL

Observations

In this section, the Visiting Teams shares any general observations and/or areas of strength regarding the school's Profile of the School and how the Profile defines the school and its priorities for improving student performance.

The team noted that what was put forward in the Profile of the School was confirmed by their observations

The school's commitment to service to its community was apparent in its mission and actions

While the administrative staff (16 people) is quite large, the size of the student body and the complexities of its funding justify this number of staff members in these roles

Staff turnover in response to the challenges of charter renewal and the availability of positions in the Philadelphia Public Schools appears to have been a one-year phenomenon

Recommendations

In this section, the Visiting Team lists any recommendations how the school can capitalize on or respond to the Profile of the School to improve its efforts to achieve its Mission and to achieve its Plan for Growth and Improvement. Recommendations are suggestions and ideas of the Visiting Team, but the school is not required to accept or act on them.

The team has no recommendations in this area, as the Profile of the School was complete and comprehensive.

PROFILE OF STUDENT PERFORMANCE

The Profile of Student Performance includes the following information and data that describe the levels of student performance on assessments that are most respected by the members of the school's community of stakeholders, valued by the school's professional staff, and/or required by the state or federal governments. The Profile includes:

- Data for standardized academic assessments.
- Data for school-based academic assessments.
- Data for achievement indicators such as graduation rate, college rigorous courses, college acceptance, etc.
- Data for citizenship measures such as attendance, promptness, discipline, etc.
- Data for state academic assessments, if applicable.

Collecting and tracking data that describe how well the school's students are performing in the areas that are normally used by the school's community of stakeholders to determine if the school is accomplishing its mission is important for the following reasons:

- The school needs these data to determine if it is making progress toward achieving its mission;
- The school needs these data to determine if its graduates are meeting the expectations expressed in the school's Profile of Graduates;
- The school needs these data to help it determine in which areas of student performance there are the largest gaps between what is expected and how student are performing and, therefore, what the focus of the school's Plan for Growth and Improvement should be.

THE VISITING TEAM'S OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS – PROFILE OF STUDENT PERFORMANCE

Observations

In this section, the Visiting Teams shares any general observations and/or areas of strength regarding the school's Profile of Student Performance and how the profile defines the school and its priorities for improving student performance.

The team noted that the school presented comprehensive information regarding the students' performance on a variety of measures

Student performance data was appropriately used to develop plans for ways that the school could continue to meet its mission via the Plan for Growth and Improvement

The team was particularly impressed with the data regarding expulsions, as the low numbers

are evidence of the school's commitment to supporting its students

Recommendations

In this section, the Visiting Team lists any recommendations how the school can capitalize on or respond to the Profile of Student Performance to improve its efforts to achieve its Mission and to achieve its Plan for Growth and Improvement. Recommendations are suggestions and ideas of the Visiting Team, but the school is not required to accept or act on them.

The team recommends that the school continue to collect and analyze data as they have for the Profile of Student Performance; doing so can help to inform any revisions of their Plan for Growth and Improvement that may be necessary in the coming years.

THE SCHOOL'S FOUNDATION DOCUMENTS: MISSION, BELIEFS, AND PROFILE OF GRADUATES

The foundation for an effective plan for improving student performance and the organization's capacity to achieve the levels of performance desired and expected is established by the school's Mission, Beliefs, and Profile of Graduates. These foundational documents answer the following questions:

- *What is our vision for a better future for the children of our school?*
- *What beliefs or core values will guide our journey?*
- *What will our students have to know, be able to do, and to demonstrate for us to achieve our mission?*

A.   MISSION

A school's Mission should reflect the deepest desires of the school's community of stakeholders for what they want the school to become—its future in terms of what it will do for its students. The mission expresses what the adults in the school community commit themselves to doing for the benefit of the students.

A mission statement should describe in broad and visionary terms what the school is striving to become. A mission should be outcome-based, providing clarity regarding the school's audience (whom it serves), its action (what it commits to doing for its audience), its aim (the purposes for which it exists), and its means (how, in broad terms, it will achieve its purposes).

It is not appropriate for a Visiting Team to determine whether the school's Mission is the right or wrong mission for the school or a good or bad mission. Nor is it appropriate for the Team to require changes to the Mission.

A Visiting Team will, however, offer an objective perspective regarding whether any elements of the Mission are unclear or seem inconsistent or incomplete. The Team will also try to ascertain whether the school's community of stakeholders support the Mission and are "walking the talk." It is then for the school to decide if the Team's comments are legitimate and relevant. It is in this spirit that the following observations on the school's mission.

The school's Mission is:

Community Academy of Philadelphia (CAP) a Pennsylvania Charter School is an independent public school. Our school is accredited PK-12 by the Middle States Association Commissions on Elementary and Secondary Schools.

Our mission is to effectively serve urban youth in search of a positive school experience in a supportive environment. CAP is dedicated to the whole child and believes that education is not just acquiring facts and skills but having the emotional and stable capacity to apply them in the real world. CAP is dedicated to offering a quality education while also responding to the non-academic student issues that can have a significant impact on academic and overall emotional/social functioning.

CAP encourages the arts and cultural activities as fundamental to a sound education. Our school challenges each student to explore his/her personal and academic potential as future adult Americans in an evolving democracy and ever-changing world. In the words of Epictetus, "Only the educated are free."

Our school holds paramount the needs of our students, and challenges the faculty and staff to be creative and nurturing. Our school values personal responsibility. We believe that a trusting, caring and mutually respectful relationship must exist between adults and young people. We affirm that a safe environment, free from violence, abuse and intimidation is possible within a framework of adult leadership.

Every aspect of CAP is dedicated to providing a quality education while keeping in mind the special needs of our students. CAP is a multi-racial, multi-ethnic, and multi-religious family that holds camaraderie and cooperation as essential values. CAP does not discriminate based on race, color, sex, sexual preference, religion, disability, or ethnic or national origin, but rather seeks to empower the diverse young people of Philadelphia through a productive and satisfying school program.

What is the aim or purpose of the school as stated in the Mission?

The aim or purpose is to provide a quality education to urban youth, while keeping all the diverse needs and non-academic issues in mind.

What is the means the school will use to accomplish it Mission?

The school will provide a safe and nurturing environment for the students and challenge the teachers and staff to be creative and nurturing in order to accomplish the mission.

To what extent do the school's stakeholders know, understand, and support the school's Mission?

It is evident that the stakeholders know, understand, and support this Mission. The Mission Statement is the first page of the student/parent handbook. All students must carry this handbook at all times. It is not completely clear if all stakeholders know the mission statement, however, it is very clear that most stakeholders exemplify the Mission and Belief in both words

and deeds.

B.   BELIEFS

Statements of belief serve as the foundation of a strong strategic plan. They are the formal expression of a school's fundamental values and serve as its ethical code. Beliefs describe the moral character of a school. In a planning process involving diverse stakeholder groups, they represent the composite of the personal values held by individual planning team members.

Because beliefs are a matter of faith, not a matter of fact, they express the school's overriding convictions, its inviolate commitments. They outline what members of the school's community of stakeholders are willing to "go to the mat" defending. Because beliefs identify the "line in the sand," they can be used as a lens through which to examine the worthiness of the school's potential decisions or future actions.

Only members of the school community can identify their deeply held beliefs. A Visiting Team can, however, offer an objective perspective on what is unclear or seems inconsistent or incomplete in the school's Beliefs. Ultimately, however, it is the school that has to decide if the Team's comments are legitimate and relevant. It is in this spirit that the following observations on the school's Beliefs are made.

The school's Beliefs are:

"CAP believes that attention to the whole child requires an attentive, multi-layered learning style setting…Our school holds paramount the needs of our students, and challenges the faculty and staff to be creative and nurturing. Our school values personal responsibility. We believe that a trusting, caring and mutually respectful relationship must exist between adults and young people. We affirm that a safe environment, free from violence, abuse and intimidation is possible within a framework of adult leadership…Every aspect of CAP is dedicated to providing a quality education while keeping in mind the special needs of our students. CAP is a multi-racial, multi-ethnic, and multi-religious family that holds camaraderie and cooperation as essential values…"

In addition, CAP's Beliefs are reflected in the Goals and Objectives that accompany our Mission Statement in all publications:
"OUR GOALS AND OBJECTIVES
- To engender a sense of accountability in which students assume responsibility and consequences for their own actions.
- To promote a safe, calm and disciplined environment in which students can come to discover and develop their talents.

- To recognize that education is a process that allows the students to integrate knowledge with life experiences.
- To instill an appreciation that the search for knowledge is a life-long journey based on the skills learned at the Community Academy of Philadelphia.
- To empower the student to recognize his/her needs and use resources to solve problems effectively.
- To foster a spirit of unity in which each individual recognizes his/her own self-worth while respecting others.
- To foster mastery of basic skills as the foundations for achievement in any endeavor.
- To instill an ethic that hard work and self-discipline are the cornerstones of success.
- To provide the student with strong and positive adult role models.
- To provide counseling and social services to aid students in their adjustment and/or re-adjustment to school life, address individual needs, and ultimately prepare for post-secondary life.
- To produce opportunities through various activities that allow the student to become responsibly independent and effectively independent.
- To encourage students to explore outside themselves and their immediate circumstances and to explore things not found in their day-to-day encounters.
- To assist and depend upon the active positive co-operation of the parents (families) of the students to teach essential values required for academic and personal success."

To what degree do the school's Beliefs meet the criteria of the *Excellence by Design* protocol? If they do not meet the criteria, explain why.

The school's Beliefs meet the criteria of the Excellence by Design protocol. The Belief Statement stresses the relationship between the adults and the children in the building and challenges the adults to be "creative and nurturing". The belief uses words such as nurturing, respectful relationships, camaraderie, and cooperation which indicates that the Belief is not just education-specific.

How well do the school's Beliefs represent what the Team heard from the school's stakeholders?

The school's Beliefs very much represent what the Team heard from all the stakeholders. For example, part of the belief statement emphasizes a 'safe environment, free from violence, abuse and intimidation...." When parents were asked why they chose this school the majority stated safety as the first reason. These parents indicated that safety at the school was extremely important and felt that their child was very safe. Many of the students also indicated how safe they felt. Both parents and students also emphasized how much the teachers cared about the individual students, which is also reflected in the belief.

To what extent do the school's stakeholders know, understand, and support the school's Beliefs of core values?

The belief is written in the student/parent handbooks and every student must have this handbook with them at all times. The stakeholders strongly support the school's Beliefs and core values.

C.   PROFILE OF GRADUATES

The Profile of Graduates provides the answer to the following question: When our students have completed our entire educational program and have had the benefit of the services and activities provided by the institution and its community:
- What do we expect them to know?
- What do we expect them to be able to do with what they know?
- What qualities or characteristics do we want them to demonstrate?

A Profile of Graduates:
- Describes the students at the point of exit from the institution.
- States the values, achievement, and readiness that each student will manifest upon graduation.
- Should be considered both as a Bill of Rights and set of corresponding responsibilities for students, faculty, staff, administration, and the institution's community.
- Defines the outcomes each and every student will attain if the mission is operative and appropriately translated into programs and services.

A Profile of Graduates serves to:
- Translate the identity, vision, and values expressed in the beliefs and mission into statements that describe student outcomes.
- Translate and transform concepts from the ideal and global to specific expression in the development of a student in the institution.
- Give expression to what the mission means in the operational life of the institution.
- Define an outline or shape each student is expected to grow into regardless of specific courses taken or post-graduation plans.
- Provide a concrete reference point for faculty, staff, and the institution's community when designing curriculum, instructional experiences, service programs, auxiliary resources, and student and family services.

The school's Profile of Graduates is:

What is the school's Profile of Graduates?

Every graduate of Community Academy of Philadelphia possesses a unique set of skills and characteristics. As an institution dedicated to serving Philadelphia youth for the past 36 years and counting, our administration, faculty, and staff work diligently to ensure our students reach their fullest potential. Community Academy of Philadelphia provides a 21 century learning environment that works towards the incorporation of technology into curriculum, promotes collaboration and teamwork, and strives to develop critical thinking skills in all students.

Community Academy of Philadelphia expects its graduates to:

Demonstrate proficiency in accessing, evaluating, and using information to expand knowledge. Students will:

- Embrace the process of learning, commit to producing their personal best, and strive for excellence
- Understand how to use their educational foundation to acquire new knowledge and develop new skills
- Integrate their educational background and knowledge with life experiences
- Possess the ability to think creatively and critically, allowing them to make informed decisions
- Appreciate that the search for knowledge is a life-long journey
- Effectively navigate current technology to acquire knowledge and access information

Develop into independent life-long learners who accept responsibility for their own education and understand the skills needed to persevere through life's challenges. Students will:

- Persevere in their quest for knowledge and achieve personal success despite occasional setbacks
- Engender a sense of accountability in which they assume responsibility and consequences for their own actions
- Realize that self-reflection and evaluation are good practice and recognize their own strengths and weaknesses
- Possess self-sufficiency and understand how to use resources to solve problems and overcome cultural, social, and economic stigmas that tend to become barriers

Demonstrate what it means to be a responsible citizen and positive role model. Students will:

- Develop a deep sense of service and understand the importance of making positive contributions to their immediate community
- Be socially responsible members of society and demonstrate ethical decision-making skills
- Understand the value of cooperation and collaboration
- Respect others' rights and responsibilities and acknowledge and celebrate diversity

To what degree does the Profile of Graduates express:

- **What the school expects its graduates to know?**
- **What the school expects its graduates to do with what they know?**
- **What qualities or characteristics the school expects its graduates to demonstrate?**

The Profile expects the students to know how to access, evaluate, and use information to expand knowledge. They are expected to accept responsibility for their own education and understand the skills needed to persevere through life's challenges with this knowledge. The qualities and characteristics expected are for the graduates to be a responsible citizen and positive role model.

To what extent do the school's stakeholders know, understand, and support the school's Profile of Graduates?

The Profile of a Graduate is shared with the faculty and staff.
The Profile is incorporated in the 8th grade culminating project.
Senior advisors are encouraged to consider the profile when working with 12th graders.

THE VISITING TEAM'S RECOMMENDATIONS—FOUNDATION DOCUMENTS: MISSION, BELIEFS, AND PROFILE OF GRADUATES

THE VISITING TEAM'S RECOMMENDATIONS:

In this section, the Team lists any recommendations to the school regarding how it can improve its Mission, Beliefs, and/or Profile of Graduates. Recommendations are suggestions and ideas of the Visiting Team, but the school is not required to accept or act on them.

Consider developing a shortened version of the mission statement that could easily be posted or recited by students and staff.

THE PROFILE OF ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

The Profile of Organizational Capacity provides information and data that portray the school's capacity to produce the levels of student performance the school and its community of stakeholders desire and expect. The Profile consists of the results of a self-assessment of the school's adherence to the Middle States Standards for Accreditation.

The twelve Standards for Accreditation reflect research-based best practices for quality in schools. The Standards also represent the organizational "building blocks" that need to be in place to produce high levels of student performance. The self-assessment leads to identifying the school's strengths and areas in need of improvement.

The Profile also provides those responsible for developing the school's Plan for Growth and Improvement with a good understanding of the current status of the school.

Standards for Accreditation for Schools
- Standard 1: Mission
- Standard 2: Governance and Leadership
- Standard 3: School Improvement Planning
- Standard 4: Finances
- Standard 5: Facilities
- Standard 6: School Organization and Staff
- Standard 7: Health and Safety
- Standard 8: Educational Program

MISSION STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION

The Standard: The school has a clearly written and actively implemented statement of mission that conveys the general and specific purposes of its educational program, expresses expectations for quality, and serves as the basis for daily operational and instructional decision making as well as long-range planning. Stakeholders give input into the development of the school's mission and understand and accept it. This document is aligned with the community served and is reviewed periodically by stakeholder representatives.

A. THE VISITING TEAM'S ASSESSMENT OF THE SCHOOL'S ADHERENCE TO THIS STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION

X	It is the Visiting Team's assessment is that the school **MEETS** this Standard for Accreditation
	It is the Visiting Team's assessment is that the school **DOES NOT MEET** this Standard for Accreditation. The evidence that supports this assessment is shown in the Recommended Stipulations shown in Section C, below.

B. EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT THE TEAM'S ASSESSMENT

Evidence	Visiting Team
Data from Observations and Interviews	X
The school's mission	X
Samples of publications that communicate the mission to the school's community of stakeholders	X
Marketing, recruitment, and admissions materials	X
Address of the school's website	X
Policies related to the mission	X

C. THE VISITING TEAM'S OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Observations

In this section, the Team lists 1) any general observations regarding the degree to which the school meets this Standard and/or its Indicators of Quality and 2) any areas in which the school exceeds the requirements of this Standard and/or its Indicators of Quality.

The Visiting Team observed that:

The mission is written in the student/parent handbook, which must be carried by students at all, times.

Through interviews with parents and students it was evident that everyone lived the mission and belief. The belief was evident in the actions and words of the students, staff, and parents.

The Visiting Team determined that the school exceeds the expectations of this Standard in the following ways:

All students and parents stressed that the school was safe, nurturing, caring, and a positive place to be. Despite the fact that the students and parents may not know the entire mission statement, the words and beliefs of the mission statement came out in the interviews. The parents, particularly, felt passionate in regards to both the safety the school provides and individualized attention given to children. The students echoed this belief in stating that the teachers really care about them and how safe they felt at the school.

Recommendations

In this section, the Team lists any recommendations to the school regarding how it can improve the degree to which it meets the requirements of this Standard and/or its Indicators of Quality. Recommendations are suggestions by the Team, but the school is not required to accept or act on them.

The Visiting Team recommends that:

CAP consider developing a shortened version of the Mission Statement or Belief that the students and staff can recite.

GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION

The Standard: The school is chartered, licensed, or authorized by a state, nation, or authority that operates in the public interest. The governance and leadership ensure the integrity, effectiveness, and reputation of the school through the establishment of policy, provision of resources, and assurance of a quality educational program. The governance and leadership act ethically and consistently to assure an atmosphere of mutual respect and purposeful effort on behalf of students and their learning. School leaders foster a productive environment for teaching and learning, timely and open communication with stakeholders, and the vision necessary for day-to-day operations and long-term planning.

A. THE VISITING TEAM'S ASSESSMENT OF THE SCHOOL'S ADHERENCE TO THIS STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION

X	It is the Visiting Team's assessment is that the school **MEETS** this Standard for Accreditation
	It is the Visiting Team's assessment is that the school **DOES NOT MEET** this Standard for Accreditation. The evidence that supports this assessment is shown in the Recommended Stipulations shown in Section C, below.

B. EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT THE TEAM'S ASSESSMENT

Evidence	Visiting Team
Data from Observations and Interviews	X
Job descriptions for the key administrative personnel	X
Appraisal tool and/or description of the process used to appraise the performance of the head of the institution	
Chart of lines of authority/responsibilities	X
Policies related to governance and leadership	X
For independent, non-public, and proprietary institutions only	
Names, addresses, and organizational position of the institution's owners	

Names, address, affiliation of the members of the board of governance	X

C. THE VISITING TEAM'S OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Observations

In this section, the Team lists 1) any general observations regarding the degree to which the school meets this Standard and/or its Indicators of Quality and 2) any areas in which the school exceeds the requirements of this Standard and/or its Indicators of Quality.

The Visiting Team observed that:

The members of the Board of Trustees are dedicated to serving the school and bring important and appropriate expertise to the important work of the Board

The Board and school leadership work collegially to ensure the success of the school in living up to its mission

The Board and school leadership were collaborated on activities associated with the Middle States accreditation process

The school leadership provides models of professional behavior

A succession plan has been discussed

Recommendations

In this section, the Team lists any recommendations to the school regarding how it can improve the degree to which it meets the requirements of this Standard and/or its Indicators of Quality. Recommendations are suggestions by the Team, but the school is not required to accept or act on them.

The Visiting Team recommends that:

A succession plan be put in place for all leadership roles

The Board consider adding independent members who will provide perspectives different from those of members who are closely associated with the school

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLANNING STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION

The Standard: The school uses a collaborative process to develop and implement a written strategic or long-range plan to improve its educational program and services. Plans are aligned with the school's mission and its operational plans, and are focused on continuous improvement of student performance, staff professional and organizational growth.

A. THE VISITING TEAM'S ASSESSMENT OF THE SCHOOL'S ADHERENCE TO THIS STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION

X	It is the Visiting Team's assessment is that the school **MEETS** this Standard for Accreditation
	It is the Visiting Team's assessment is that the school **DOES NOT MEET** this Standard for Accreditation. The evidence that supports this assessment is shown in the Recommended Stipulations shown in Section C, below.

B. EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT THE TEAM'S ASSESSMENT

Evidence	Visiting Team
Data from Observations and Interviews	X
Strategic and/or long-range plan	X
Development/institutional advancement plan	X
Enrollment plan	X
Policies related to school improvement planning	X
Facilities plan	X

C. THE VISITING TEAM'S OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Observations

In this section, the Team lists 1) any general observations regarding the degree to which the school meets this Standard and/or its Indicators of Quality and 2) any areas in which the school exceeds the requirements of this Standard and/or its Indicators of Quality.

The Visiting Team observed that:

The school has a well-established planning culture, as was evident not only in the self-study and the documents provided for the team but also in conversations with members of the school staff and Board.

Plans are well-aligned with the school's mission

All plans are in place and are thoughtful and workable; they provide strong guidance to those who are to carry them out

There school worked hard to include members of the larger community of stakeholders

Of particular note was the facilities plan, which was comprehensive

The school follows the PDE mandated policies regarding Comprehensive Planning

Recommendations

In this section, the Team lists any recommendations to the school regarding how it can improve the degree to which it meets the requirements of this Standard and/or its Indicators of Quality. Recommendations are suggestions by the Team, but the school is not required to accept or act on them.

The Visiting Team recommends that:

CAP continue to nurture the planning culture that has been established

FINANCES STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION

The Standard: Financial resources are sufficient to provide the educational opportunities defined in the school's philosophy/mission. The business practices of the school are ethical. These practices promote confidence in the school's ability to manage fiscal and material resources in a responsible manner and follow prescribed budgeting and accounting principles. The majority of resources raised for school purposes is dedicated to the school's operations.

A. THE VISITING TEAM'S ASSESSMENT OF THE SCHOOL'S ADHERENCE TO THIS STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION

X	It is the Visiting Team's assessment is that the school **MEETS** this Standard for Accreditation
	It is the Visiting Team's assessment is that the school **DOES NOT MEET** this Standard for Accreditation. The evidence that supports this assessment is shown in the Recommended Stipulations shown in Section C, below.

B. EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT THE TEAM'S ASSESSMENT

Evidence	Visiting Team
Data from Observations and Interviews	X
Current operating budget (for main campus and each branch campus)	X
Certified external audit letter conducted within the last two years (for main campus and each branch)	X
Student tuition and fee schedule (if applicable)	X
Long-range financial plan	X
Schedule of student tuition and fees (for non-public and proprietary institutions)	
Evidence that the institution has no contingent liabilities or on-going litigations that potentially could affect the institution's ability to continue operation	X

List of grants and other funding sources obtained in the last calendar year	X
Publications provided to students outlining students' financial obligations	
Summary of the institution's insurance coverage (for main campus and each branch)	X
Policies related to finances, financial aid, and refunds	NA

C. THE VISITING TEAM'S OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Observations

In this section, the Team lists 1) any general observations regarding the degree to which the school meets this Standard and/or its Indicators of Quality and 2) any areas in which the school exceeds the requirements of this Standard and/or its Indicators of Quality.

The Visiting Team observed that:

The school has a strong financial history, including refinancing of the bonds that made it possible to move to its current facility

Despite unforeseen decreases in funding during the 2015-2016 school year from the City of Philadelphia and federal sources, the school has maintained a balanced budget

The CFO has negotiated decreases in expenses for health and dental insurance and for pension contributions

With the positive resolution of recent legal proceedings, expenses for legal fees will decrease significantly

In response to the departure of members of the staff to take city school positions at higher salaries, the school increased staff salaries; while these are still lower than those at public schools, the staff is grateful that the school recognized the need to address this issue

New legislation, passed in the spring of 2016, is anticipated to bring additional state funds to the school

Recommendations

In this section, the Team lists any recommendations to the school regarding how it can improve the degree to which it meets the requirements of this Standard and/or its Indicators of Quality. Recommendations are suggestions by the Team, but the school is not required to accept or act on them.

The Visiting Team recommends that:

The school continue its prudent fiscal management policies and procedures

FACILITIES STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION

The Standard: School facilities are safe, clean, and well maintained. The physical environment supports delivery of the educational program/services as well as optimal student development and achievement. Facilities are appropriate and adequate to implement the philosophy/mission of the school. They are regularly inspected for effective operation and meet all applicable laws including health and safety code requirements.

A. THE VISITING TEAM'S ASSESSMENT OF THE SCHOOL'S ADHERENCE TO THIS STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION

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	It is the Visiting Team's assessment is that the school **DOES NOT MEET** this Standard for Accreditation. The evidence that supports this assessment is shown in the Recommended Stipulations shown in Section C, below.

B. EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT THE TEAM'S ASSESSMENT

Evidence	Visiting Team
Data from Observations and Interviews	X
Floor plan of facilities	X
Long-range facilities plan	X
Maintenance/repair schedules	X
Plans for any facilities improvements	X
Policies related to facilities	X
Maintenance Handbook	X
Maintenance Request Log	X

C. THE VISITING TEAM'S OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Observations

In this section, the Team lists 1) any general observations regarding the degree to which the school meets this Standard and/or its Indicators of Quality and 2) any areas in which the school exceeds the requirements of this Standard and/or its Indicators of Quality.

The Visiting Team observed that:

General Overall Cleanliness of facilities
Well documented 3-year plan
Adequate Staffing (or Contract) to meet facility needs
Facility has enough equipment for staff and students
Procedures in place to meet requested needs of staff for improvements
Annual inspections completed and documented
Formal schedule of operations for maintenance and grounds
Documented list of existing equipment and furnishings and purchase date
Hallways congested during passing time

Recommendations

In this section, the Team lists any recommendations to the school regarding how it can improve the degree to which it meets the requirements of this Standard and/or its Indicators of Quality. Recommendations are suggestions by the Team, but the school is not required to accept or act on them.

The Visiting Team recommends that:

The school explore options to reduce hallway congestion

SCHOOL ORGANIZATION AND STAFF STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION

The Standard: The school's organizational structure and climate facilitate achievement of its core values as expressed in the philosophy/mission. The school culture supports successful implementation of age- and developmentally appropriate educational programs and services. Roles, responsibilities, expectations, and reporting relationships are clearly defined. Administrative, instructional, and support staff are qualified, competent, and sufficient in number to effectively provide quality educational experiences. The school regularly conducts staff performance appraisals and offers professional development opportunities informed by its philosophy/mission. Relationships among the staff and leadership are collegial and collaborative.

A.   THE VISITING TEAM'S ASSESSMENT OF THE SCHOOL'S ADHERENCE TO THIS STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION

X	It is the Visiting Team's assessment is that the school **MEETS** this Standard for Accreditation
	It is the Visiting Team's assessment is that the school **DOES NOT MEET** this Standard for Accreditation. The evidence that supports this assessment is shown in the Recommended Stipulations shown in Section C, below.

B.   EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT THE TEAM'S ASSESSMENT

Evidence	Visiting Team
Data from Observations and Interviews	X
Organizational chart for the school and school system	X
List of members of the professional and support staffs	X
Salary schedules and descriptions of benefits packages for teachers, specialists, and support staff	X
Contracts (e.g. union, collective bargaining agreements)	X
Results of any climate survey	X

Instruments used for evaluating the performance of the staff	X
Professional development plan	X
Policies related to school climate and organization	X

C. THE VISITING TEAM'S OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Observations

In this section, the Team lists 1) any general observations regarding the degree to which the school meets this Standard and/or its Indicators of Quality and 2) any areas in which the school exceeds the requirements of this Standard and/or its Indicators of Quality.

The Visiting Team observed that:

Teachers expressed that having the half day Wednesday schedule and common specials allowed for grade level teams and mixed grade level teams to collaborate and plan for upcoming school week.

Most teachers shared that they feel supported by teaching colleagues and additional support staff.

Most teachers viewed outside support as effective because administration is open to concerns or challenges and allow for on-going modifications.

Multiple staff members stated that they felt teacher evaluations were fair and comparable to other schools and school districts.

Teachers shared that they do not have control over the professional development opportunities offered at the school, but they were overall useful.

Teaching staff explained that the principals conducted formal evaluations twice a year for first time teachers and once a year for teachers with 1+ year of experience.

Parents, teachers and students were positive about the school's strength of trust, pride and safety.

We observed very large class sizes close to 30 students per class.

Recommendations

In this section, the Team lists any recommendations to the school regarding how it can improve the degree to which it meets the requirements of this Standard and/or its Indicators

of Quality. Recommendations are suggestions by the Team, but the school is not required to accept or act on them.

The Visiting Team recommends that:

The school take steps to create a system in which teachers are able to share their professional experiences with other teachers in the school by leading in-house and turnkey professional development opportunities.

CAP explore ways to have consistent organization of department and grade level chairs across schools.

Consideration be given to having paraprofessionals in primary grade classrooms.

The school develop a plan to recruit more diverse staff.

A school-wide positive behavior protocol to support consistency across grade levels be considered.

CAP explore ways to reduce teacher-pupil ratio particularly in the primary, but throughout the school to enhance the probably of success in achieving student performance objectives.

HEALTH AND SAFETY STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION

The Standard: A safe, orderly, and healthy environment for teaching and learning is provided. The school adheres to local, state, and federal government health and safety requirements. Health, safety, preventive/emergency procedures, and crisis management policies are clearly written, well documented, implemented, and updated regularly.

A. THE VISITING TEAM'S ASSESSMENT OF THE SCHOOL'S ADHERENCE TO THIS STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION

X	It is the Visiting Team's assessment is that the school **MEETS** this Standard for Accreditation
	It is the Visiting Team's assessment is that the school **DOES NOT MEET** this Standard for Accreditation. The evidence that supports this assessment is shown in the Recommended Stipulations shown in Section C, below.

B. EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT THE TEAM'S ASSESSMENT

Evidence	Visiting Team
Data from Observations and Interviews	X
Emergency and crisis plans	X
Records of most recent health and safety inspections	X
Record of emergency drills	X
Emergency Procedures section of Faculty Handbook	X
Security Handbook and Training Manual	X
School Discipline Data	X

C. THE VISITING TEAM'S OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Observations

In this section, the Team lists 1) any general observations regarding the degree to which the school meets this Standard and/or its Indicators of Quality and 2) any areas in which the school exceeds the requirements of this Standard and/or its Indicators of Quality.

The Visiting Team observed that:

An ample security force was in place, with established stations and routines

Both the perimeter of the school and school entryways were well secured during school hours

Student searches were conducted prior to their entering the building

Well established routines were in place for dismissal of students, both walkers and those taking buses or being picked up by parents

All students and employees wore Identification badges at all times

Evacuation plans were posted in each room throughout building

The Health Office was under the care of a Registered Nurse

Health Records were maintained and locked in cabinet

Student Prescriptions (Physicians note required) were stored in locked cabinet

Screenings were completed annually for designated populations

Procedures in place to address student needs during extracurricular activities and field trips

The Visiting Team determined that the school exceeds the expectations of this Standard in the following ways:

Efficiency and visibility of the Security Detail

Commitment of the entire school community to the safety and health of their students

Recommendations

In this section, the Team lists any recommendations to the school regarding how it can improve the degree to which it meets the requirements of this Standard and/or its Indicators of Quality. Recommendations are suggestions by the Team, but the school is not required to accept or act on them.

The Visiting Team recommends that:

The school continue its positive health and safety activities

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION

The Standard: An effective educational program for a school consists of both carefully planned and well executed curriculum programs and solid instructional pedagogy. Also fundamental to a successful educational program are the means to assess student performance and growth as well as programmatic evaluation. Thus, curriculum, instruction, and assessment are often considered to be the "heart" of any school since these three components have such an impact on the total school experience of students. The curriculum outlines what students should know and be able to do. Instruction identifies effective ways for teachers to ensure student learning takes place. Assessment indicates at what level students are able to demonstrate knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

A.   THE VISITING TEAM'S ASSESSMENT OF THE SCHOOL'S ADHERENCE TO THIS STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION

X	It is the Visiting Team's assessment is that the school **MEETS** this Standard for Accreditation
	It is the Visiting Team's assessment is that the school **DOES NOT MEET** this Standard for Accreditation. The evidence that supports this assessment is shown in the Recommended Stipulations shown in Section C, below.

B.   EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT THE TEAM'S ASSESSMENT

Evidence	Visiting Team
Data from Observations and Interviews	X
Program of studies or other overview of the components of the educational program	X
Scope and sequence charts	X
Written curriculum guides for each component of the educational program	X
Master schedule	X
Policies related to educational program	X

C. THE VISITING TEAM'S OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Observations

In this section, the Team lists 1) any general observations regarding the degree to which the school meets this Standard and/or its Indicators of Quality and 2) any areas in which the school exceeds the requirements of this Standard and/or its Indicators of Quality.

The Visiting Team observed that:

The school has high expectations for their students' learning and performance

Teachers provide experiences for students that promote strategic thinking and problem solving

The main mode of instruction was teacher directed in the middle and high school.

The primary classes utilize more of a variety of instructional methods, delivered in different settings

There is a desire to differentiate more of the instruction to better meet the needs of their individual students

There are grade level meetings to collaborate and improve lessons

The school is utilizing curriculum mapping software to coordinate curriculum between grades and divisions

The faculty and staff actively seek to train students in the non-academic areas of social behavior, attitudes and habits that make academic learning easier to access.

Parents and students attested to the strong efforts made to prepare students for successful transitions to the next level in their educational experience.

Recommendations

In this section, the Team lists any recommendations to the school regarding how it can improve the degree to which it meets the requirements of this Standard and/or its Indicators of Quality. Recommendations are suggestions by the Team, but the school is not required to accept or act on them.

The Visiting Team recommends that:

CAP continue pushing for more hands-on, collaborative and small group activities to support student learning throughout the school.

CAP continue moving forward with increased use of differentiated instruction at all levels.

ASSESSMENT AND EVIDENCE OF STUDENT LEARNING STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION

The Standard: The school systematically collects and rigorously analyzes quantifiable and observable evidence of individual learning and growth from multiple valid and reliable sources. Evidence of student learning is used to evaluate and improve curriculum effectiveness, instructional practices, professional development, and support services. Progress in student learning and performance is expected and is accurately, clearly, and systematically reported to the school community.

A. THE VISITING TEAM'S ASSESSMENT OF THE SCHOOL'S ADHERENCE TO THIS STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION

X	It is the Visiting Team's assessment is that the school **MEETS** this Standard for Accreditation
	It is the Visiting Team's assessment is that the school **DOES NOT MEET** this Standard for Accreditation. The evidence that supports this assessment is shown in the Recommended Stipulations shown in Section C, below.

B. EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT THE TEAM'S ASSESSMENT

Evidence	Visiting Team
Data from Observations and Interviews	X
Example of student transcript	X
Example student report card	X
Reports of the results of assessments administered to students	X
Policies related to assessment of student learning	X

C. THE VISITING TEAM'S OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Observations

In this section, the Team lists 1) any general observations regarding the degree to which the school meets this Standard and/or its Indicators of Quality and 2) any areas in which the school exceeds the requirements of this Standard and/or its Indicators of Quality.

The Visiting Team observed that:

Students were taking AP tests.
Teachers referenced assessments during interviews, particularly the Keystone tests.
Implementation of the Atlas program for curriculum mapping has begun.
Teachers referenced Keystone during instruction, giving strategies to students.
Behavior is assessed and students receive grades for behavior.

Recommendations

In this section, the Team lists any recommendations to the school regarding how it can improve the degree to which it meets the requirements of this Standard and/or its Indicators of Quality. Recommendations are suggestions by the Team, but the school is not required to accept or act on them.

The Visiting Team recommends:

The creation of short common assessments to measure students' growth.
More ongoing formative assessments during lessons to gauge if students have reached the lesson's objective
Professional development on creating measurable lesson objectives.
Professional development on creating varied "checks for understanding" during each lesson.
Systematic ways to collect data, analyze the data, and use this information to drive instruction.

STUDENT SERVICES STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION

The Standard: The school implements written policies and procedures, in partnership with families and the community, that provide all students with, or refer them to, services that are age- and developmentally appropriate to optimize opportunities for life-long success. Student services are systematic and integral to the educational program. They are provided by qualified personnel, sufficiently financed, periodically evaluated, and philosophy/mission appropriate.

A. THE VISITING TEAM'S ASSESSMENT OF THE SCHOOL'S ADHERENCE TO THIS STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION

X	It is the Visiting Team's assessment is that the school **MEETS** this Standard for Accreditation
	It is the Visiting Team's assessment is that the school **DOES NOT MEET** this Standard for Accreditation. The evidence that supports this assessment is shown in the Recommended Stipulations shown in Section C, below.

B. EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT THE TEAM'S ASSESSMENT

Evidence	Visiting Team
Data from Observations and Interviews	X
Guidance and counseling plan	X
Examples of student schedules	X
Results of follow-up studies of graduates	X
Policies related to student services, including guidance and counseling, admissions, transportation, food services, and special education	X
Admissions criteria (if applicable)	X

C. THE VISITING TEAM'S OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Observations

In this section, the Team lists 1) any general observations regarding the degree to which the school meets this Standard and/or its Indicators of Quality and 2) any areas in which the school exceeds the requirements of this Standard and/or its Indicators of Quality.

The Visiting Team observed that:

The school has qualified faculty to meet the special learning needs of their students from the elementary to high school level.

The "Core Team" exists to support teachers when issues arise that impede student learning in the regular classroom. They create a plan to be implemented that provides strategies and actions to improve the student's ability to be successful in class.

Staff provides support for emotional, social and behavioral issues so that when the student is in class learning can occur.

An orientation program is available for new students and their families to share the school's mission, educational program, services, policies, and expectations.

Teachers and staff are available after school for tutoring of students as wanted and/or needed.

Teaching of Life Skills is evident across levels and settings in the school.

Student dining areas were clean and the Food Services manager is interested in providing healthy meals the students like to eat.

Parents expressed appreciation for the hard work of faculty and staff that enables their child to succeed to the best of their ability.

Students expressed appreciation for the encouragement and "push" from their teachers that brought them greater success in school.

The school provided National Clearinghouse statistics tracking college retention and graduation rates

Recommendations

In this section, the Team lists any recommendations to the school regarding how it can improve the degree to which it meets the requirements of this Standard and/or its Indicators of Quality. Recommendations are suggestions by the Team, but the school is not required to accept or act on them.

The Visiting Team recommends that:

CAP continue providing the student services that are in place as they are meeting the needs of your student body.

CAP continue the passion and care of the students that is evident and that helps them reach

their full potential.

STUDENT LIFE AND STUDENT ACTIVITIES STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION

The Standard: A healthy atmosphere exists for all students. At all levels, non-discriminatory, appropriate student activities that supplement classroom experiences or community life are provided. An appropriate student activities program fosters a positive intellectual, cultural, and social climate, promotes growth in student leadership and social interaction skills, and encourages students' special interests.

A.   THE VISITING TEAM'S ASSESSMENT OF THE SCHOOL'S ADHERENCE TO THIS STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION

X	It is the Visiting Team's assessment is that the school **MEETS** this Standard for Accreditation
	It is the Visiting Team's assessment is that the school **DOES NOT MEET** this Standard for Accreditation. The evidence that supports this assessment is shown in the Recommended Stipulations shown in Section C, below.

B.   EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT THE TEAM'S ASSESSMENT

Evidence	Visiting Team
Data from Observations and Interviews	X
Samples of student publications—e.g., yearbook, student newspaper, literary magazine	X
Budget for all athletic activities	X
Budget for all non-athletic activities	X
Policies on academic eligibility	X
Policies related to student life and student activities	X

C.   THE   VISITING   TEAM'S   OBSERVATIONS   AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Observations

In this section, the Team lists 1) any general observations regarding the degree to which the school meets this Standard and/or its Indicators of Quality and 2) any areas in which the school exceeds the requirements of this Standard and/or its Indicators of Quality.

The Visiting Team observed that:

Students staying after school for clubs and tutoring in elementary and high school.
There is high participation in clubs and athletics.
Many engaging field trip opportunities for students including overseas.
A good balance of athletic teams and academic clubs.
The high school students were very proud of the pins that represented all accomplishments.
Students are expected to fulfill 30 hours of community service.
There is an elaborate code of conduct and students are required to carry it at all times. teachers reference the code of conduct for violations.
Students at all level expressed a desire for more sports teams.
Parents desired summer programs for the students.
Students wanted a competitive sports league.

Recommendations

In this section, the Team lists any recommendations to the school regarding how it can improve the degree to which it meets the requirements of this Standard and/or its Indicators of Quality. Recommendations are suggestions by the Team, but the school is not required to accept or act on them.

The Visiting Team recommends:

That the school explore establishing additional sports opportunities
That the school consider establishing additional summer programs

INFORMATION RESOURCES STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION

The Standard: Information resources, materials, and technology are accessible and of adequate scope, quantity, and quality to facilitate the school's pursuit of its total educational program. These resources encourage all students and staff to broaden and extend their knowledge and skills. Access to appropriate information resources and technology is provided for students and staff. Appropriate instruction is offered to develop student and staff inquiry, research, and information literacy skills. Information technology equipment is functional and well maintained.

A. THE VISITING TEAM'S ASSESSMENT OF THE SCHOOL'S ADHERENCE TO THIS STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION

X	It is the Visiting Team's assessment is that the school **MEETS** this Standard for Accreditation
	It is the Visiting Team's assessment is that the school **DOES NOT MEET** this Standard for Accreditation. The evidence that supports this assessment is shown in the Recommended Stipulations shown in Section C, below.

B. EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT THE TEAM'S ASSESSMENT

Evidence	Visiting Team
Data from Observations and Interviews	X
The information resources and technology plan(s)	X
Budget for information resources and technology	X
Information skills curriculum	X
Inventory of information resources	X
Inventory of information technology equipment	X
Policies related to information resources and technology	X

C. THE VISITING TEAM'S OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Observations

In this section, the Team lists 1) any general observations regarding the degree to which the school meets this Standard and/or its Indicators of Quality and 2) any areas in which the school exceeds the requirements of this Standard and/or its Indicators of Quality.

The Visiting Team observed that:

The school provides a variety of technological resources for both staff and students (Mac mini servers, i-pads, Chromebooks, MacBook Pros, SMART Boards, projectors, etc.)

In all of the 12 classes observed on the first day, all teachers used varied forms of technology resources including SMART Boards, Chromebooks and Mac Book Pros.

All teachers used SMART Boards as a method of presenting visual information

Some students were observed using computers (Chrome Books/ MacBooks) to do the following:

Literacy and Math skill review using sites (Study Island, brain pop, First in Math, etc.)

Reading online text books and completing class assignment on Chromebooks

Developing music for final project using various music programs

Researching science terms about telescopes and microscopes using a search engine.

Observed the Information Technology technician going into classrooms to offer support to teachers.

In the Music Formation class students were able to learn and apply 21st century skills to create music using various software and forms.

Teachers stated that the new IT contractor addresses issues within a timely fashion using the online ticket system.

The IT department has expressed suggestions for improvement and is going to be implemented some improvements in the summer of 2016.

Teachers shared that they received training on any new software or wed-based resources before class implementation.

Observers noticed that students used technology with care and stayed on task with the purpose of the lesson.

The librarian provides weekly lessons to students K-4th grade using the Community Academy of Philadelphia Curriculum (ex. Concepts: Identifying text features, evaluating diverse media, selecting informational texts & literary non-fiction, research process: developing research topics and questions).

The library is open to students before and after school and during SSR period for upper grade high school students.

Teachers and staff sign and adhere to the Acceptable Use Policy

The Visiting Team determined that the school exceeds the expectations of this Standard in the following ways:

That staff and students accessed various forms of technology in the classroom setting to support teaching and learning on a consistent basis.

Recommendations

In this section, the Team lists any recommendations to the school regarding how it can improve the degree to which it meets the requirements of this Standard and/or its Indicators of Quality. Recommendations are suggestions by the Team, but the school is not required to accept or act on them.

The Visiting Team recommends that:

The school to take steps regarding determining and supporting the instructional staff in using technology to transform the nature of teaching in connection to research, documentation and extending learning throughout all grades.

The school incorporate a computer science class to focus on teaching skills such as keyboarding and Microsoft Office programs (Word, Excel and PowerPoint).

THE PLAN FOR GROWTH AND IMPROVEMENT

Introduction

The purpose of the self-study and accreditation process is first and foremost to establish whether the school meets the Standards for Accreditation, the fundamental requirement to be accredited. However, establishing that the school has in place the building blocks for a quality school is largely an exercise of looking backward to see what has been accomplished.

The *Excellence by Design* protocol is based in the principles and concepts of strategic planning. Therefore, the protocol requires the school to be forward thinking, not focusing so much on the past and past accomplishments but, instead, focusing on the future—what does the school have to do differently or do better to further its mission and to ensure that all of its students are able to achieve the knowledge, skills, and characteristics the school has defined in its Profile of Graduates.

Therefore, the culminating activity of the self-study and accreditation process is the developing of a Plan for Growth and Improvement in Student Performance.

Developing a Plan for Growth and Improvement involves:
- Establishing a vision for the school by creating or reaffirming a statement of mission.
- Identifying a set of beliefs that will serve as the school's ethical code.
- Developing a profile of the knowledge, skills, and qualities the school expects of its graduates.
- Identifying the areas of student performance that are the priorities for growth and improvement.
- Developing action plans to achieve the performance objectives.
- Monitoring implementation of the action plans.
- Conducting periodic reviews of the progress being made toward achievement of its objectives.

Following are the required components of the Plan for Growth and Improvement:
- A Mission
- Beliefs
- A Profile of Graduates
- Three, four, or five objectives measurable student performance/organizational capacity objectives; at least two must be focused on growing and improving student performance
- One or more assessments for each objective
- Baseline data for at least one assessment for each objective
- Technical approval of the objectives
- Comprehensive action plans to achieve the objectives

- A plan for regular monitoring and review of the Plan (at least once annually)

A. STUDENT PERFORMANCE/ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY OBJECTIVES AND ACTION PLANS

The centerpiece of the school's Plan for Growth and Improvement is formed by the three, four, or five areas of measurable objectives the school has identified as being the highest priorities for growth and improvement if the school is to move closer to achieving its Mission. At least two of the objectives must focus on areas of student performance that have been determined to be priorities for growth and improvement. The remaining one, two, or three objectives may be either student performance objectives and/or objectives focused on growing and improving the school's organizational capacity to produce the levels of student performance desired and expected by the school's community of stakeholders. Space is provided below to evaluate the maximum number of objectives. This limited number of objectives is suggested so the school can focus on the most critical aspects of student performance without diverting its energies in too many directions.

To identify these priority areas, the Planning Team asked itself:
- *What are the gaps between what we say in our Profile of Graduates regarding what we want our graduates to know, be able to do, and/or what qualities we want them to demonstrate and our students' actual performance in those areas?*
- *Which of these gaps constitute the highest priorities for narrowing if we are to move closer over the next seven years to achieving our mission?*
- *Are there area of our organization's capacity the must be improved in order to improve our students' performance to the levels we desire and expect*

Specifying clear and measurable student performance objectives identifies the school's commitment to achieve specific end results and thus, is tied directly to accountability. The objectives must be written in such a way that they outline growth in student performance for the next seven years and represent a major focus for growth and improvement in student performance in the school. The objectives should be consistent with the mission and should extend and define the *aim* portion of the mission in more specific detail. Objectives explicate in measurable terms the key end results that the school seeks to realize from its mission, as expressed in its Profile of Graduates. Not only should the objectives be related to the school's mission, but where there is also a district or system plan, the objectives should be linked to one or more of the district's or system's objectives.

The term "student performance" is intended to be defined in the broadest possible terms. The objectives submitted for accreditation may be focused on *any* of the outcomes expected of students as stated in the Profile of Graduates.

Action plans describe the methods the school will use to accomplish its mission and its performance/capacity objectives. Action plans provide detailed descriptions of the specific actions required to achieve desired results outlined in the student performance improvement and organizational capacity objectives. This is the "doing" part of the plan. Action plans can and should include multiple activities that will engage the school in improvement activities for the next seven years. Action plans should be specific and tell in detail how the school will accomplish its objectives. Action plans should relate directly to the objectives, but they also should be related to the mission.

The Visiting Team examined the action plan(s) for the performance/capacity objectives in the school's Plan for Growth and Improvement according to the criteria for effective action plans.

A.1. Objective #1

X	This is a student performance objective
	This is an organizational capacity objective

By the year 2023, CAP will increase student academic performance in the academic areas of math and science as evidenced by:

1) Combined PSSA math/Algebra I Keystone Exam average for students in grades 3-8; 11: 50.0% of all students will demonstrate proficiency by earning a proficient/advanced score; a 23.8% increase from the baseline data
Baseline Year: 2015
Baseline Data: 26.2% proficient/advanced (average of PSSA and Keystone info below)

  A) Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) mean math score for students in grades 3-8: 40.0% of all students will demonstrate proficiency by earning a proficient or advanced score; a 29.1% increase from the baseline data
  Baseline Year: 2015
  Baseline Data: 10.9% proficient / advanced
  B) Algebra I Keystone Exam Measurement for students by Grade 11:
  70.0% of all students will demonstrate proficiency by earning a score of 1500 or above; a 28.5% increase from the baseline data
  Baseline Year: 2015

Baseline Data: 41.5% proficient / advanced

C) SAT math increases: 13.3% increase in the percentage of college-bound 12th grade students scoring 500 or higher on the SAT mathematics section by senior year to reach 25% Baseline Year: 2015
Baseline Data: 11.7% of college-bound seniors (11 students out of 94) scored 500 or higher on the SAT mathematics section

D) An increase in the percentage of students in grades K-2 who met or exceeded their projected RIT scores on the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) math Assessment: 63.3% of K-2 students will demonstrate proficiency by meeting or exceeding their projected RIT score; a 30.0% increase from the baseline data
Baseline Year: 2015
Baseline Data: 33.3% of K-2 students met or exceeded their projected math RIT score

E) Combined Classroom Diagnostic Tool (CDT) Math/Algebra score averages for students in grades 3-11 will maintain an annual improvement of:
8.9% from the baseline score to the best score
Baseline Year: 2015
Baseline Data: average improvement of 8.9%

2) Combined PSSA Science/Biology I Keystone Exam average for students in grades 3-8; 11: 69.7% of all students will demonstrate proficiency by earning a proficient/advanced score; a 30.3% increase from the baseline data
Baseline Year: 2015
Baseline Data: 39.4% proficient/advanced (average of PSSA and Keystone info below)

A) Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) mean science score for students in grades 4 & 8:
60.0% of all students will demonstrate proficiency by earning a proficient or advanced score; a 30.5% increase from the baseline data
Baseline Year: 2015
Baseline Data: 29.5% proficient / advanced

B) Biology Keystone Exam Measurement for students in Grade 11:
74.6 % of all students will demonstrate proficiency by earning a score of 1500 or above; a 25.4% increase from the baseline data
Baseline Year: 2015
Baseline Data: 49.2% proficient / advanced

	YES	NO
Is the objective:		

Closely associated with the exit outcomes for students as expressed in the Profile of Graduates, graduation requirements, and/or performance expectations for the school's students?	X	
Reflective of the school's mission, and supportive of the strategic plan of the larger organization?	X	
Does the objective:		
Include baseline data, and are they logically organized and presented in an easily understood format?	X	
Enjoy the support of the school's stakeholders as one of the highest priorities for growth and improvement in student performance?	X	
Does the school:		
Have sufficient energy and resources to support the implementation of the action plans and the achievement of the objectives?	X	
Have an effective and efficient way to gather data to assess the progress of the objective?	X	
Is the objective reasonable and achievable?	X	

What recommendations can the Team offer to the school for any areas evaluated No and/or to improve the clarity and focus of this objective?

Because schools in Pennsylvania are judged using the School Performance Profile (SPP) CAP has wisely put in place Middle States objectives that match the expectations of the state on the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment and the Keystone examination.

The team has no recommendations as to ways to improve this objective, other than making the observation that goals of this kind can be difficult to achieve as student test performance is dependent on many variables that are beyond what the school can control.

A.2. Action Plan for Objective #1:

In the table below, evaluate the degree to which this action plan meets the criteria for an effective action plan.

Does this action plan:	YES	NO
Include strategies/action steps that are comprehensive in scope?	X	

Include a logical sequence of strategies and/or action steps?	X	
Outline clearly and in detail the action steps to be taken in the first two to three years of the plan?	X	
Include enough activities to ensure that the objective will be achieved?	X	
Address as many aspects of the institution's programs, activities, and services as appropriate?	X	
Address aspects of the Middle States Standards for Accreditation identified as weak in the institution's self-assessment of how well it meets the Standards?	X	
Identify the resources required to implement the action steps?	X	
Identify the persons/groups responsible for implementing each action step?	X	
Vary the groups/individuals responsible so that the burden for implementation does not fall on just one or two individuals?	X	
Include clear indicators of success for each action step so the institution knows what action steps have been implemented and with what result?	X	
Establish reasonable timelines for implementing the action steps?	X	
Demonstrate discipline and reasonableness by spreading action steps throughout the entire life of the plan so as not to overwhelm the time, energy, and resources available for implementing a plan?	X	

What recommendations can the Team offer to the school for any areas evaluated "No" to improve the clarity and focus of this action plan?

None of the areas were evaluated as being deficient; indeed, these action steps could serve as a model for other schools as they develop their Plans for Growth and Improvement.

A.3. Objective #2:

X	This is a student performance objective
	This is an organizational capacity objective

By the year 2023, CAP will increase student academic performance in the academic area of ELA/Literature as evidenced by:

1) Combined PSSA ELA/Literature Keystone Exam average for students in grades 3-8; 11:

   71.4% of all students will demonstrate proficiency by earning a proficient/advanced score; a 28.7% increase from the baseline data

   Baseline Year: 2015

   Baseline Data: 42.7% proficient/advanced (average of PSSA and Keystone info below)

A) Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) mean ELA score for students in grades 3-8:

   69.1% of all students will demonstrate proficiency by earning a proficient or advanced score; a 31.0% increase from the baseline data

   Baseline Year: 2015

   Baseline Data: 38.1% proficient / advanced

B) Literature Keystone Exam Scores for students by Grade 11:

   78.3% of all students will demonstrate proficiency by earning a score of 1500 or above; a 21.8% increase from the baseline data Baseline Year: 2015

   Baseline Data: 56.5% proficient / advanced

2) SAT reading section score increases:

   14.05% increase in the percentage of college-bound students scoring 500 or higher on the SAT reading section by senior year to reach 30% Baseline Year: 2015

   Baseline Data: 15.95 % of college-bound seniors (15 students out of 94) had scored 500 or higher on the SAT reading section

3) An increase in the percentage of students in grades K-2 who met or exceeded their projected RIT scores on the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) reading assessment:

   65.0% of K-2 students will demonstrate proficiency by meeting or exceeding their projected RIT score; a 27.1% increase from the baseline data

   Baseline Year: 2015

   Baseline Data: 37.9% of K-2 students met or exceeded their projected reading RIT score

4) Combined Classroom Diagnostic Tool (CDT) ELA/Literature score averages for students in grades 3-11 will maintain an annual improvement of:

   9.2% from the baseline score to the best score

   Baseline Year: 2015

   Baseline Data: average improvement of 9.2% in grades 3-11

	YES	NO
Is the objective:		

Closely associated with the exit outcomes for students as expressed in the Profile of Graduates, graduation requirements, and/or performance expectations for the school's students?	X	
Reflective of the school's mission, and supportive of the strategic plan of the larger organization?	X	
Does the objective:		
Include baseline data, and are they logically organized and presented in an easily understood format?	X	
Enjoy the support of the school's stakeholders as one of the highest priorities for growth and improvement in student performance?	X	
Does the school:		
Have sufficient energy and resources to support the implementation of the action plans and the achievement of the objectives?	X	
Have an effective and efficient way to gather data to assess the progress of the objective?	X	
Is the objective reasonable and achievable?	X	

What recommendations can the Team offer to the school for any areas evaluated No and/or to improve the clarity and focus of this objective?

Because schools in Pennsylvania are judged using the School Performance Profile (SPP) CAP has wisely put in place Middle States objectives that match the expectations of the state on the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment and the Keystone examination.

The team has no recommendations as to ways to improve this objective, other than making the observation that goals of this kind can be difficult to achieve as student test performance is dependent on many variables that are beyond what the school can control

A.4. Action Plan for Objective #2:

In the table below, evaluate the degree to which this action plan meets the criteria for an effective action plan.

Does this action plan:	YES	NO
Include strategies/action steps that are comprehensive in scope?	X	

Include a logical sequence of strategies and/or action steps?	X	
Outline clearly and in detail the action steps to be taken in the first two to three years of the plan?	X	
Include enough activities to ensure that the objective will be achieved?	X	
Address as many aspects of the institution's programs, activities, and services as appropriate?	X	
Address aspects of the Middle States Standards for Accreditation identified as weak in the institution's self-assessment of how well it meets the Standards?	X	
Identify the resources required to implement the action steps?	X	
Identify the persons/groups responsible for implementing each action step?	X	
Vary the groups/individuals responsible so that the burden for implementation does not fall on just one or two individuals?	X	
Include clear indicators of success for each action step so the institution knows what action steps have been implemented and with what result?	X	
Establish reasonable timelines for implementing the action steps?	X	
Demonstrate discipline and reasonableness by spreading action steps throughout the entire life of the plan so as not to overwhelm the time, energy, and resources available for implementing a plan?	X	

What recommendations can the Team offer to the school for any areas evaluated "No" to improve the clarity and focus of this action plan?

None of the areas were evaluated as being deficient; indeed, these action steps could serve as a model for other schools as they develop their Plans for Growth and Improvement.

A.5. Objective #3:

	This is a student performance objective
X	This is an organizational capacity objective

Objective: By 2023, Community Academy of Philadelphia will cultivate a school-wide culture that encourages high expectations and college and career preparation for all students.

	YES	NO
Is the objective:		
Closely associated with the exit outcomes for students as expressed in the Profile of Graduates, graduation requirements, and/or performance expectations for the school's students?	X	
Reflective of the school's mission, and supportive of the strategic plan of the larger organization?	X	
Does the objective:		
Include baseline data, and are they logically organized and presented in an easily understood format?	X	
Enjoy the support of the school's stakeholders as one of the highest priorities for growth and improvement in student performance?	X	
Does the school:		
Have sufficient energy and resources to support the implementation of the action plans and the achievement of the objectives?	X	
Have an effective and efficient way to gather data to assess the progress of the objective?	X	
Is the objective reasonable and achievable?	X	

What recommendations can the Team offer to the school for any areas evaluated No and/or to improve the clarity and focus of this objective?

The focus of the objective is crystal clear, and provides excellent focus for the entire school community; therefore the team has no recommendations for improvement.

A.6.   Action Plan for Objective #3:

In the table below, evaluate the degree to which this action plan meets the criteria for an effective action plan.

Does this action plan:	YES	NO
Include strategies/action steps that are comprehensive in scope?	X	
Include a logical sequence of strategies and/or action steps?	X	
Outline clearly and in detail the action steps to be taken in the first two to three years of the plan?	X	
Include enough activities to ensure that the objective will be achieved?	X	
Address as many aspects of the institution's programs, activities, and services as appropriate?	X	
Address aspects of the Middle States Standards for Accreditation identified as weak in the institution's self-assessment of how well it meets the Standards?	X	
Identify the resources required to implement the action steps?	X	
Identify the persons/groups responsible for implementing each action step?	X	
Vary the groups/individuals responsible so that the burden for implementation does not fall on just one or two individuals?	X	
Include clear indicators of success for each action step so the institution knows what action steps have been implemented and with what result?	X	
Establish reasonable timelines for implementing the action steps?	X	
Demonstrate discipline and reasonableness by spreading action steps throughout the entire life of the plan so as not to overwhelm the time, energy, and resources available for implementing a plan?	X	

What recommendations can the Team offer to the school for any areas evaluated "No" to improve the clarity and focus of this action plan?

This action plan is thorough and thoughtful; the steps that the school has put in place are varied and appropriately focused on activities that will contribute to achieving this objective. The team has no recommendations as to ways of improving this action plan.

B. THE VISITING TEAM'S OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this section, the Team reports its observation and recommendations regarding the degree to which the school's Plan for Growth and Improvement meets the requirements of the protocol.

The Requirements of the Protocol for the Plan for Growth and Improvement

In this section, the Visiting Team reports whether the school's Plan for Growth and Improvement meets the requirements of the protocol.

Requirement of the Protocol	Met	Not Met
Three, four, or five objectives measurable student performance/organizational capacity objectives; at least two must be focused on growing and improving student performance.	X	
One or more assessments for each objective	X	
Baseline data for at least one assessment for each objective	X	
Technical approval of the objectives	X	
Comprehensive action plans for each objective	X	
Plan for regular monitoring and review of the Plan (at least once annually)	X	

Observations

In this section, the Team lists 1) any general observations regarding the degree to which the school meets the requirements of the protocol for the Plan for Growth and Improvement (objectives and action plans) and 2) any areas in which the school exceeds the requirements of the requirements of the protocol.

As noted above, the team was impressed with the Plans for Growth and Improvement as put forward by the school.
The plans meet all of the requirements of the protocol, and go above and beyond expectations in the level of sophistication and detail that appears in the action plans.

In using a broad range of test data for the student performance goals, the school has maximized its opportunities for success, which can be difficult to achieve, given the variables that affect student test scores.

The team was particularly impressed with the comprehensive action plans that are in place to change the school culture around students' post-Cap plans—they include a broad range of school stakeholders, which will serve the school well in achieving this objective.

Recommendations

In this section, the Team lists any recommendations to the school regarding how it can improve the degree to which it meets the requirements of the protocol for the Plan for Growth and Improvement. Recommendations are suggestions by the Team, but the school is not required to accept or act on them.

The Visiting Team recommends:

That the school take pride in all that it has accomplished in defining their Plans for Growth and Improvement, and move forward with their action plans!

ACCREDITATION RECOMMENDATION

After its visit to the school, and after considering the evidence seen and heard during the visit, the Middle States Visiting Team is charged with making a recommendation to the Middle States Commission(s) regarding the accreditation action the Commission(s) should take.

Based on the evidence presented by the school in its Self-Study Document and supporting documentation, and based on the evidence seen and heard by members of the Team from the school's community of stakeholders, the Team recommends to the Middle States Commission(s) that it take the following accreditation action:

ACCREDITATION

An "Accredited" institution is an educational organization that meets all MSA Standards for Accreditation, adheres to applicable MSA policies, and meets the requirements of the self-study protocol used. The institution agrees to adhere to the requirements for maintenance of accreditation, and there are no outstanding issues related to the Standards or requirements of the protocol that would require monitoring or onsite visits beyond the normal expected events required by the protocol utilized.

NEXT STEPS

As Community Academy of Philadelphia proceeds with the implementation of its Plan for Growth and Improvement, there are a number of "next steps" the school will be expected to take in order to maintain accredited status. These include the following:

- **Maintain Adherence to the Middle States Standards for Accreditation.**
  The twelve Standards for Accreditation reflect research-based best practices for quality in schools. The Standards also represent the organizational "building blocks" that need to be in place to produce high levels of student performance. An accredited school is required to maintain its adherence to the Standards for Accreditation throughout its term of accreditation.

- **Implement the Plan for Growth and Improvement.**
  When the Middle States Association grants accreditation to a school using the *Excellence by Design* protocol, it does so with the understanding that the school will make a good faith effort to implement the Plan for Growth and Improvement that served as one of the bases for accreditation.

- **Submit an Annual Profile and Nominations to Serve on Visiting Team.**
  As a requirement to maintain its accreditation, the school is required to submit an Annual Profile in which it either confirms or revises basic data about the school. A second requirement is that the school nominates members of its staff to serve on Visiting Teams to other schools.

- **Conduct Periodic Reviews of the Plan for Growth and Improvement**
  While Middle States does not "collect" evidence of the school's annual review, the school is expected to conduct periodic reviews of its Plan. The purpose of the periodic reviews is to ensure that progress is being made in implementing the Plan, to update and revise the Plan as needed, and to pause to celebrate successes. The school should keep records of what transpired during each review such as meeting agendas, minutes, documented changes to the Plan, and summaries of results of the assessments being used to measure progress toward achieving the objectives. Documentation will be required for the Mid-Term Report and by the next Visiting Team.

- **Complete a Mid-Term Report**
  At the beginning of the third year in the accreditation term, the school will be required to submit a Mid-Term Report in which it will provide evidence of its implementing its Plan for Growth and Improvement and of progress being made toward achieving its objectives. The Report will be reviewed by the Middle States staff, which may determine that an on-site visit should be conducted to examine any areas of concern.

- **Prepare for Reaccreditation**

  At the beginning of the sixth year of the school's accreditation term, begin a new self-study in preparation for the visit of the next Visiting Team. It should be noted, however, that if the school has implemented a planning ethic and the *Excellence by Design* school improvement process has been ongoing as expected, and preparing for the next team visit should be an extension of work already underway.

SUMMARY AND CLOSURE

Good afternoon and many thanks to all of you for making our visit a pleasure from start to finish. You have shared your plans and hopes and dreams for Community Academy and its students. We have learned from you, in both your self-study and in our conversations over the past three days, about the many strengths of the school community and of some of the challenges that face the school in the years to come. We have been welcomed in every way possible, and are particularly grateful to Liz McCluskey and Laura Kibler, who made sure that we were in the right place at the right time throughout our visit. And special thanks are due to Delilah Cruz, who made sure that we were well fed with local specialties and cheerfully transported us through rush hour traffic twice each day, to get us to and from our hotel.

I also must thank the members of our team, Tina Eisenhauer, Tom O'Hara, Erika Magana and Patricia Prosser. All of the team members are caring and thoughtful educators who brought outstanding professional expertise and enthusiasm to the complex and demanding task of service on our Middle States visiting team. I am most grateful for their service.

The next steps in the Middle States process will stretch over the next 6 to 8 months. In about three weeks a draft of our report will be sent to your school administrators, who will have the opportunity to review it for any errors of fact. When that review is complete, the report will be submitted to the Middle States office in Philadelphia where it will be reviewed by a member of their staff. Next, in early fall, a Middle States Advisory Committee will do yet another review and make a recommendation to the Middle States Commission, the group that has the final decision-making authority regarding accreditation. Their decision will be made later in the autumn.

Today I'll be presenting an overview of the report we will be submitting. At the close of my presentation, the team will leave—as is specified by Middle States procedures --there will not be a discussion period or a question and answer session.

Our report contains a great deal of good news about what the team has seen during our time with you, as well as suggestions and recommendations that our team hopes that you will consider as you go forward over the next accreditation period. And you should know that our recommendations are just that--ideas that the school can consider; not mandates that must be followed. Please do not focus on these recommendations as reflecting flaws in your program or faults that must be corrected--rather, they are the team's thoughts as to things that you might do to make a fine school even better!

Our team came to your school with several purposes. Our first charge was to ensure that Community Academy meets the Middle States standards for accreditation. We also are asked to evaluate whether you have a plan in place to move forward and continue in your quest for

continuous improvement. Our goal throughout our visit has been guided by the desire to leave everyone in the school community in a strong position to achieve your goals.

As you know, the Middle States standards set expectations for nearly every aspect of life in schools, from its philosophy and mission to its finance and facilities, student services, educational programs, and plans for the future. In preparing for accreditation your school community has taken the standards to heart and made enormous strides in meeting them in advance of our visit. All are to be commended for their efforts in this regard, as well as for their thorough and thoughtful self-study and accompanying documents.

It was abundantly clear to the team that the Community Academy community is united in its commitment to the school's mission. You know who you are and who you serve. Everyone—the board, the teachers, students, staff, parents alike—everyone has the same vision for the school, its purposes, and the paths to be followed to fulfill that mission. Everyone associated with the school lives the messages of its mission every day, in every class. For this reason, the team believes that the school does not just meet but exceeds the expectations of the mission standard.

Playing central roles in this regard are those with governance and leadership responsibilities. The board and school administrators are dedicated not only to the success of the school, but also to the success of each of their students. The board is comprised of a range of individuals whose expertise is well-suited to guiding the school in achieving its mission. Members of the Board are active in their support of the school, serving on committees and taking an active role in setting policies and overseeing financial matters for the school. The founder and head of the school, Joseph Proietta, a man of vision and determination, has guided CAP in providing exemplary educational experiences for all of its students. Working with him are a talented cadre of professionals who serve as school principals, instructional leaders, and financial and operations managers. Their collegial working relationships provide models for relationships throughout the school community.

Financially the school, through prudent fiscal management, is on a sound footing. In spite of several unexpected reductions in state and city payments to the school, staff salaries have recently been raised, and costs for benefits decreased. As is the case with many, even most, charter schools, staff salaries are still below those of local districts. Given these circumstances, the dedication and commitment of the staff to the school and its students is worthy of special commendation.

The Community Academy facilities are unique in many ways, from being housed in what was once a Kraft cheese factory to the careful design of available space to support educational goals. The school is well-maintained with a comprehensive three-year plan to address major projects to implement further upgrades to what is already an outstanding facility. Students and others have noted that passing times in the high school corridor are particularly congested; while no

easy solution is apparent, the team hopes that the school will explore options to reduce this congestion.

The team was pleased to learn that a comprehensive crisis management plan is in place; it is our deepest hope that you will never find it necessary to implement many of its features, but so important to have in place during these difficult times. More visible is the presence of well-trained security guards throughout the school. Both students and parents cited safety as a positive aspect of life at CAP, and the presence of the guards contributes to the sense of well-being throughout the school. The use of metal detectors and transparent book bags also contribute to the safety of the school environment. Delays for security checks at arrival time are seen as problematic by students, who can be declared to be late if the lines are long and slow; the team suggests that the school explore ways to speed arrival processing.

In addition, CAP is fortunate to have on staff a fully staffed health office. For all of these reasons the team believes that the school exceeds the expectations of the Health and Safety standard.

But the Community Academy of Philadelphia is far more than its administrative structure and facilities. Parent comments are uniformly positive. Members of the staff work collegially and cooperatively, in both formal and informal settings.

The climate and culture at CAP is notably caring and nurturing. Teachers expressed appreciation for professional development opportunities and were particularly pleased that they had autonomy in developing their own approaches to teaching the skills required by the common core. Members of the staff are appropriately certified, and many hold master's degrees. The school has a strong reimbursement program to support members of the staff who desire to take additional coursework in the field of education. The team noted that class sizes hovered around 30 students throughout the school, and suggests that the school explore ways to reduce teacher-pupil ratios to enhance the probability of success in achieving their student performance objectives.

The various curriculum materials shared with the team are appropriate to meet the academic needs of a diverse population of students, some of whom have Individual Education Plans, others who are enrolled in general education and others in Advanced Placement courses. Classes were typically teacher-directed, often with the class reading a common text and responding to questions from the teacher. SmartBoards were present and in use in all of the classrooms, used for everything from the administration of quizzes to searches for information to support research projects to Khan Academy lessons. Writing assignments were evident throughout the school, from the early grades through the high school. The team also saw evidence of projects such as model kitchens, book jackets, and terrariums and other science displays. To facilitate more independent learning experiences and higher level thinking skills the team suggests that the school explore implementation of small group lessons and collaborative learning opportunities, as well as even more hands-on learning experiences.

Assessment at CAP takes many forms, including the Keystone assessments and the PSSA, as well as AP examinations for students enrolled in AP courses. Commercially available assessments are used in the programs as appropriate. Evidence of daily progress is maintained for each class, though the team saw little evidence of formative assessments. To further enhance teaching and learning, the team recommends that the school investigate the creation of short common assessments and professional development activities around such topics as the creation of measurable lesson objectives and the use of informal checks for understanding.

Services for students are strong at CAP. Core teams are in place to ensure that appropriate intervention plans are in place for those students who need additional support. Qualified staff are in place to assist the 25% of students who have IEPs or 504 plans; their assistance is much appreciated by staff and parents alike. Life skills instruction is available for students in need of such training.

Opportunities beyond the classroom are ample at CAP, as evidenced by the lapel pins worn with pride by the high school students. There are clubs ranging from Amnesty International to Yoga, sports from bowling to basketball and more. While there is a student advisory board, no elected student council is in place; adding this option for students at the middle and high schools would provide them with a way to learn firsthand about government, as well as an official means of communicating student concerns and interests to school administrators. Students, not surprisingly, would like more sports, and to participate in league tournaments, and the establishment of JV or middle school teams would enhance athletic options at the school. Of particular note are the overseas travel opportunities for high school students.

The student-parent handbook is 83 pages of important information about life at CAP, even including how to tie a Half Windsor. Students take the rules and the use of the handbook seriously, as do their parents. Students do, however, think that some of the rules are overly strict, and would like to have opportunities to discuss possible changes with the administration. Student services at CAP exceed the expectations set forth in the Middle School standards.

Technology resources are ample at CAP, from Chromebooks to music and video production equipment. The electronic infrastructure has recently been significantly upgraded, with additional wireless access newly available. There are SmartBoards in place in all of the classrooms. Internet policies are in place but could be revised to reflect expectations regarding social media and other current internet offerings. Tech support is available to assist with problems and provide instruction regarding the technology use. Paper products are not neglected at CAP, which has a well-equipped and well-staffed library. Given the extensive use being made of technology at the school, the team suggests that keyboarding instruction and the use of common software programs be included in a computer literacy course or program. Even without such courses, the team believes that CAP exceeds expectations of the Information Resources standard.

In looking to the future, the Community Academy of Philadelphia has created ambitious action plans.

The action plans, both those for student performance in Science, Mathematics and English/Language Arts as well as the plan to cultivate a culture that encourages high expectations and college and career preparation, address important needs. The decision to set the same goals for both Middle States and components leading to the Pennsylvania School Performance Profile was wise, as it allows staff and students alike to focus on one set of goals and the activities necessary to meet them. While test-related goals are can be difficult to meet, given the many variables that affect student performance, the school has set what appear to be achievable performance levels. The action plans that you have put in place are thorough and appropriate, setting forth specific tasks to be accomplished on sensible timelines with well-defined indicators of success. Indeed, your action plans could serve as a model for other schools as they move through the Middle States accreditation process.

It is clear to the team that the elements are in place for the school to succeed in meeting their goals-- a talented staff that is committed to the school and its students, a devoted parent community, and supportive school governance and leadership.

In our meetings with members of the CAP community--teachers, students, parents--I've asked that they provide a word that describes the school. Much to their dismay I eliminated the word FAMILY as a possibility, as it clearly is perhaps the most defining term of all for life at CAP! But they came through with others that capture the essence of the school:
unique--resilient--nurturing--challenging--consistent--also flexible--clean--strict--safe--
evolving--and amazing

Now for the news that you have been waiting so patiently to hear: The team is pleased to be able to recommend to the Middle States Commission that Community Academy of Philadelphia be accredited for another seven years.

With that, we bid you farewell, affirming that you are a caring community, poised to succeed in serving CAP students, now and well into the future.

VISITING TEAM ROSTER

Role	Name	School/Organization
Chair of the Team	Kalle Gerritz	Gramon Family of Schools Fairfield, New Jersey
Team Member	Tina Eisenhauer	Wilmington Christian School Wilmington, Delaware
Team Member	Erika Magana	Bridges Public Charter School Washington, District of Columbia
Team Member	Thomas J. O'Hara	G. Harold Antrim School Point Pleasant Beach, New Jersey
Team Member	Patricia Prosser	Cambridge-South Dorchester High School Cambridge, Maryland