

MIDDLE STATES ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES AND SCHOOLS
COMMISSIONS ON ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS

ACCREDITATION FOR GROWTH

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

City Charter High School
Pittsburgh, PA

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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 100 years, the Association has provided leadership in educational quality and school improvement for its member schools in Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and in schools in Europe, the Middle East, the subcontinent of Asia, and Africa.

The school that is the subject of this report selected the *Accreditation for Growth (AFG)* self-study and accreditation protocol. *AFG* outlines a unique accreditation process that uses strategic and site-based planning as vehicles for school improvement and growth in student performance. The protocol, developed by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, also provides linkages between school improvement efforts at the school and system levels. The primary determinants of progress within the protocol are the actual results the school obtains in student performance rather than the quality of the school's programs and resources. *AFG* requires the school to focus its mission and improvement objectives on its vision of a preferred future for its students; therefore, it is a future-oriented process. *AFG* also requires the school to conduct continuous reviews of its programs and services and allows diverse constituent groups to participate in charting the future of the school.

To be accredited through the *Accreditation for Growth* 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.

In addition, the school must demonstrate that it has or is developing a planning ethic to ensure the school has both the will and the capacity to implement its plan and achieve its objectives.

When a school selects *AFG* as its accreditation protocol, it must make several commitments:

Focusing Improvement Efforts on Growing and Improving Student Performance

The school must commit itself to focusing its growth and improvement efforts primarily on growing and improving its student performance and the school's capacity to affect that growth and improvement. Improvement efforts must be aimed at targeted growth and improvement in student learning, student performance, and student results. The school must commit itself to continuous evaluation of the results it is achieving by putting into place the organization and processes needed to implement its plan faithfully, formally reviewing its plan periodically, and submitting itself to external review and evaluation by a team of its peers.

Establishing and Maintaining a Culture of Accountability for Student Performance

The school must commit itself to being accountable for its student performance and have in place a viable system for monitoring achievement of its objectives and the action plans to achieve them.

Establishing and Maintaining a Planning Ethic

The school must commit itself to continuous clarification of its unique mission, beliefs, and expectations in terms of student performance. The school must be action-oriented as shown by the development of long-term strategic action plans that integrate program, services, facilities, and other support systems to address growth needs. The school must have or be developing a planning ethic to ensure the school has both the will and the capacity to implement its plan and achieve its objectives.

Involving the School's Community of Stakeholders in its Growth and Improvement Efforts

The school must commit itself to involving a broad spectrum of the members of its community of stakeholders in identifying its mission, beliefs, a profile of its graduates, the objectives for growth and improvement in student performance, the action plans to achieve the objectives, and in overseeing implementation of action plans and monitoring achievement of the objectives.

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 *Accreditation for Growth* 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.

THE CONTEXT OF THE SCHOOL

The Context of the School describes the context in which the school exists. It presents a portrait of the school's "distinctive personality" and the unique characteristics of the school. The Context of the School consists of the following elements:

- Profile of the School's Community
- Profile of the School
- Profile of Student Performance

The data and information contained in the Context of the School are not evaluated by the Visiting Team. Instead, the Context 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, provides one of the lenses through which Team members will view and evaluate the school. Thus, the Context 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.

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

Observations

City Charter High School was created in 2002 to offer a more substantial education to the middle 50% of students. The founders of City High, Richard Wertheimer and Mario Zinga, wanted to offer a program that helped create a graduate that was college or career ready. As the school has moved forward, they have focused on several projects to meet this goal. All students, faculty, and administrators loop with grade levels to create a community-based feel.

In January of 2012, the High School moved to the former Verizon Building. Each grade level was placed on their own floor. Also, the Senior Class was moved to their own wing of the building, and the Senior curriculum was designed to better reflect the college experience. A critical portion of the City High experience is an internship experience that begins in the student's Junior year. After nearly three years of preparation, each student is placed with a local business that reflects the student's career interests. During this internship, the student is

able to work in and learn about a discipline that they are interested in.

The school has placed a great deal of emphasis on helping students set and achieve realistic goals. Two full-time transition coordinators help students determine their strengths and weaknesses, and then reach those goals by the end of their high school career. But furthermore, the school is concerned with making sure that the student is successful in their post-high school life. At City High, they are more interested in making sure their students are successful in the long run, rather than just pushing them into college.

As with all school districts, City High faces challenges. Their students struggle with issues of absenteeism. As a charter school, City High faces unique challenges as well. It is hard to convince a ninth grader that going to school in July is fun. It is even harder to convince him that going to school until four is in his best interests. However, the school remains committed to their vision.

Recommendations

As the school moves forward, continue to hold to the vision that was outlined in the original vision of the school. However, City High should also continue to remain flexible as a variety of regulations and opportunities occur that can alter a student's education.

THE PLANNING PROCESS

INTRODUCTION

A sound planning ethic and planning process are every bit as critical to achieving an 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 *AFG* protocol, it must commit to working toward establishing and maintaining a planning ethic within the institution. A planning ethic means that planning for growth 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 *Accreditation for Growth* 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.

THE VISITING TEAM'S OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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

First, the Visiting Team provides any general observations regarding the school's adherence to Requirements of the Protocol for Planning Process and any areas in which the school exceeds the Requirements.

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

Monitoring Issues refer to requirements that are not completely absent but that are met only partially and are in need of either completion or improvement. Monitoring issues must be addressed satisfactorily by the mid-term of the school's term of accreditation.

Stipulations are Requirement(s) of the Protocol that are entirely absent and, therefore, the school does not meet and, therefore, must be added as a stipulation to the school's accreditation.

A. Planning Team

The Visiting Team observed:

- City High has a Leadership Team that is composed of a variety of administrators and teachers. This group of twelve individuals meets on a weekly basis to discuss any issues. The team then also served as the Planning Team for the Middle States process. This group identified the Internal Coordinators and had final say over the Objectives and the Action Plans.

The Visiting Team recommends:

- One of the strengths of the City High model is the amount of time committed to

professional development. This model creates a collaborative environment that lets all members of the Leadership Team have a voice in the planning process. Continue to have the Middle States goals and objectives be a focus of this time period.

B. Role of the Internal Coordinators

The Visiting Team observed:

- The Internal Coordinators are Patrice Johnson and Lou Tamler. Ms. Johnson was selected to be one of the Internal Coordinators because she was one of the original staff members and was already the Principal associated with student services. As such, she felt it made sense for her to be one of the Internal Coordinators. Mr. Tamler was selected as one of the Internal Coordinators because he served in this role during the last Middle States process, and he is one of the longest-tenured members on the faculty. Both Internal Coordinators served on numerous other aspects of the Middle States procedure, and were an active part of the entire process.

The Visiting Team recommends:

- Both Internal Coordinators have done a commendable job of preparing the school for the entire process. City High should continue to use the structure they have put in place as they move forward.

C. Role of the School's Leadership

The Visiting Team observed:

- The school has five Principals, each of which manages one grade level and has a secondary area of focus. The Principals are all part of the schools leadership team which also functions as the Planning Team. Furthermore, each Principal serves as the Co-Chair for one of the Objectives. As such, each member of the school's leadership is a vested member of the Middle States process and the vision of City High.

The Visiting Team recommends:

- The school's leadership should continue to maintain the community and best practices they have identified.

D. Role of the Governing Body

The Visiting Team observed:

- The Board of Directors has been made aware of the Middle States process. They conducted an in-depth review of the Action Plans during the Self-Study process.

The Visiting Team recommends:

- The Planning Team should work to include the Board of Directors in the Middle States process as much as possible.

E. Role of the External Facilitator

	The school used the services of an External Facilitator
X	The school did not use the services of an External Facilitator

F. Communication and Awareness Activities

The Visiting Team observed:

- The school used professional development days to work on the Middle States process with the faculty. Four-hour blocks on several half days were used for planning, and staff members were invited to be a part of this process. The school attempted to involve parents in the planning process, but struggled to find those that could arrange their work schedule. Parents are introduced to the concepts and the vision behind the Middle States process during bi-annual Parent-Teacher Conferences, and at the Open House. Students are aware of the concepts if not the language of Middle States.

The Visiting Team recommends:

- The school should continue to work on involving parents and students in the Middle States process.

G. Action Plan Teams

X	The school used Action Plan Teams
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	The school did not use Action Plan Teams
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The Visiting Team observed:

- Each Objective was designed by a separate Action Plan Team. Each team was co-chaired by one member of the Administration and one member of the faculty. The teams were composed of a variety of faculty members.

The Visiting Team recommends:

- Work to include students and stakeholders in the Action Plan process as much as possible.

H. Implementation Teams

	The school used Implementation Teams
X	The school did not use Implementation Teams

I. Periodic Reviews of the Plan for Growth and Improvement

The Visiting Team observed:

- The school has a yearly annual report conducted by an outside organization. Furthermore, the Planning Team meets one a week, as well as for two full days during each trimester. While this time is not exclusively devoted to the Middle States process, the committee makes an effort to ensure that at least several of these periods are devoted to the Middle States process.

The Visiting Team recommends:

- The Planning Committee should continue to remain diligent with regards to the Middle States process. The amount of time that the committee has spent on the process is clearly reflected in both the self-study and the overall process.

Overall Assessment—Requirements of the Protocol for Planning Process

X	The Visiting Team’s assessment is that the school MEETS the Requirements of the Protocol for Planning Process
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	<p>DOES NOT MEET the Requirements of the Protocol for Planning Process for the following reason(s):</p> <p><i>[Note: A determination that the school does not meet the Requirements of the Protocol for Planning Process requires that a stipulation is added to the school's accreditation.]</i></p>
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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 Planning Process and 2) any areas in which the school exceeds these Requirements of the Protocol.

- It is very clear the school has met the Requirements of the Protocol for the Planning Process. The Planning Team is composed of a variety of faculty and administrators who meet weekly. Each Action Team is made up of a focused group that has selected their own objectives that fit into the overall goal of the school. The Objectives are data driven and the Action Plans are detailed and provide a clear pathway to achieving each goal. While it would be preferable to include parents, students, and stakeholders on the different teams, the school is aware of the constraints on these groups and works to include them as much as possible.

Recommended Monitoring Issue(s):

In this section, the Team lists any Requirements of the Protocol for the Planning Process that require ongoing monitoring. Monitoring Issues refer to requirements that are not completely absent but that are only partially in compliance and are either in need of completion or improvement. Monitoring issues must be addressed satisfactorily by the mid-term of the school's accreditation.

Requirement of the Protocol	Recommended Action
NONE	

Recommended Stipulation(s):

In this section, the Team lists any Requirements of the Protocol for the Planning Process the school does not meet and, therefore, must be included as a stipulation to the school's accreditation.

Requirement of the Protocol	Recommended Action
NONE	

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 *Accreditation for Growth* 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 components of the Plan for Growth and Improvement in Student Performance:

- Mission
- Beliefs
- Profile of Graduates
- External Scan (optional)
- Internal Scan (optional)
- Measurable student performance objectives
- Action plans to achieve the objectives

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT EFFORTS

In this section, the Visiting Team provides its observations regarding the degree to which the school’s planning process and Plan for Growth and Improvement are aligned with other school improvement efforts and or those of a parent system.

The Plan for Growth and Improvement was based on several school improvement efforts. Each Objective that was chosen was an area that the school recognized as a needed area of growth. Also, each Objective ties to the initial vision and charter of the school that was laid out in 2002 and updated as needed. City High made a concerted effort to make their Middle States journey an accurate reflection of their overall plan for growth.

A. MISSION, BELIEFS, AND PROFILE OF GRADUATES

A.1. 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 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 its purposes).

While 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 or whether the school and its community of stakeholders support and are “walking the talk” of the Mission. However, it is up to 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:

The mission of City Charter High School ...

a technology infused public school, is to graduate students who are academically, technologically, personally and socially prepared to succeed in post-secondary education, training or employment. Using a team approach, City High cultivates a safe, supportive and academically rigorous environment by recognizing and nurturing individual talents, needs and skills.

What is the school's *audience* as identified in the Mission?

- Students who aim to graduate from an intentionally rigorous high school and pursue some form of post-secondary education are the audience.

What is the *unique identity* of the school as identified in the Mission?

- City High is uniquely a "technology infused" school, exercising a 1:1 computer to student ratio. The school also uses a "team approach."

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

- The aim of the school is "to graduate students who are academically, technologically, personally, and socially prepared to succeed in post-secondary education."

What is the *action* of the school as stated in the Mission?

- City High actively "cultivates a safe, supportive and academically rigorous environment by recognizing and nurturing individual talents, needs, and skills."

What is the *means* the school will use to accomplish its Mission?

- The means used to accomplish the Mission are varied: team teaching, teacher looping, a 1:1 technology to student ratio, senior independent studies, and graduating classes organized by cohorts.

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

- The stakeholders, primarily the various adult stakeholders, know and understand the mission well. All stakeholders, students included, understand the school's purpose, unconsciously, if not consciously. Students, teachers, and administrators know and appreciate why they are here and what they are working toward.

A.2. 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:

The six core beliefs of City High are:

Connections to the real world. A career focused experience convinces students that what they do at City High impacts their future.

Continuous challenge. A curriculum constructed with multiple levels best meets the academic needs of individual students.

Individual responsibility for learning. Academic success is dependent on students taking an active role in their learning.

Personal academic connections. Success relies strongly on each student feeling connected to one or more adults at City High.

Safe and caring environment. Essential to active classroom engagement.

Collaboration. A student's ability to collaborate is essential in today's work environment.

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

- The Core Beliefs are written succinctly and easily formatted, but two Beliefs, "personal academic connections" and "collaboration" are abstract in wording. The extensions of these two beliefs utilize indirect, vague language, whereas the other four Beliefs are written more concretely.

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

- The Beliefs align with the opinions and feelings of all stakeholders.

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

- The stakeholders live the beliefs. The administrations' and instructors' passion is palpable.

A.3. 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.
- 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:

A graduate of City Charter High School will:

- Possess foundational academic skills and the ability to access, synthesize and apply new knowledge.
- Have a comfort level with current technology and the confidence to adapt to future technology.
- Possess the personal qualities needed to be a self-assured, motivated, responsible young adult.
- Possess the work ethic to succeed in post-secondary education or training.
- Effectively navigate through a variety of interpersonal situations in family, community, school and workplace settings.

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 of the Graduates addresses all of the above to a full capacity.

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

- The Profile of the Graduates indicates that the stakeholders are highly aware of the school's target and function.

THE VISITING TEAM'S RECOMMENDATIONS—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.

- NONE

THE VISITING TEAM'S RECOMMENDED MONITORING ISSUES:

In this section, the Team lists any requirements for the Mission, Beliefs, and/or Profile of Graduates that require monitoring. Monitoring issues refer to elements of Mission, Beliefs, and Profile of Graduates required by the protocol that are not completely absent but are met only partially and are either in need of completion or improvement. Monitoring issues must be corrected by mid-term in the school’s accreditation.

Requirement of the Protocol	Action Recommended
NONE	

THE VISITING TEAM'S RECOMMENDED STIPULATIONS:

In this section, the Team lists requirements for the foundational documents (Mission, Beliefs, and Profile of Graduates) that are entirely absent and, therefore, the school does not meet. Such requirements must be added as a stipulation to the school’s accreditation.

Requirement of the Protocol	Action Recommended
NONE	

B. STUDENT PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES AND ACTION PLANS

The centerpieces of the school's Plan for Growth and Improvement are the two, three, or four areas of student performance the school has identified as being the highest priorities for growth and improvement if the school is to move closer to achieving its Mission. 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 two, three, or four of these gaps constitute the highest priorities for narrowing if we are to move closer over the next seven years to achieving our mission?*

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 expresses 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.

The Team's observations and recommendations regarding the Plan should be read in conjunction with the Plan as presented by the school in its Self-Study Document.

Action plans describe the methods the school will use to accomplish its mission/philosophy 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/philosophy.

The Visiting Team examined the action plans for the performance/capacity objectives in the school's Plan for Growth and Improvement and has determined if the plans meet the criteria for effective action plans.

B.1. Student Performance Objective #1:

Ensuring City High graduates have the skills and understandings needed to be effective Independent Learners.

Independent Learning is the only goal that City High identified as part of the first accreditation process it went through with Middle States that continues to be a focus in this second process. The goal, though, has moved from being considered through the lens of the various content areas (what does independent learning look like in a City High math class) to being considered through the lens of the different grade level teams (What does independent learning mean when looking at a City High sophomore?

What needs to be done by the entire team to help that student hone his or her skills and become effective as a City High junior?)

We will take what we have learned through focusing on Independent Learning in the content areas and begin having that discussion with grade level teams. By doing so, City High will be charging the grade level teams, the groups that drive change at the school, to ensure the concept is institutionalized and that a common language around Independent Learning is developed and utilized. As such, all students will leave the school with a deep understanding of how they learn and what steps they need to take to ensure that they master whatever topics and skills placed in front of them on their journey beyond City High.

The Action Plan that follows is broken down in the following areas:

- Team Skills
- Content and Application
- Culture of Best Practices

The definition of **Independent Learning** that City High staff will use to guide their work:

City High defines Independent Learners as students who consistently and appropriately apply independent learning skill sets and knowledge of academic processes and procedures to academic and life situations at proficient levels without direct teacher guidance or intervention. Independent Learning skills are those associated with preparedness, time management, use of resources, organization, student-selected collaboration, and self-evaluation or quality control; while examples of academic processes and procedures include, note-taking, active reading, the writing process, and experimental design.

Independent Learners Goals and Benchmarks

By the year 2021, 90% of City High seniors will demonstrate the independent learning skills that allow the creation of high quality products in all content areas that rival or exceed the quality of work typically produced through activities and assessments with overt teacher direction, intervention, or scaffolding. These cross-curricular skills will be measured by:

1. Skills (Team) (Process)—*Independent Learning Grades 10-11*
No more than 20% of City High student (sophomores and juniors) will receive a grade of less than Nearly Proficient (C) in any course that provides independent learning grades .

Baseline: __33.5_ % of Sophomores

__19.7_ % of Juniors

Receiving any independent learning grade of less than C at end of first trimester 2013/2014

2. Skills (Team) (Culminating) – *Independent Learning rubric for grade 12*
90% of City High graduating seniors will receive grades of proficient or advanced on City High’s senior independent learning rubric.

Baseline: __93__ % of graduating seniors were rated as proficient or advanced in independent learning at the end of 2012/2013

3. Culture -- Annual Stakeholder Survey

80% of responses to questions on the annual survey dealing with issues involving independent learning will reflect student, parent, and teacher understanding of, and buying into, City High’s efforts in this area.

Baseline: __87__ % of parents

__66__ % of students

__65__ % of staff

Agree or strongly agree with the series of questions focusing on issues involving independent learning in the annual survey.

	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?

- While City Charter High has provided data for each of the three “cross-curricular” skills identified as subsectors of Objective #1, some of the baseline data already exceed the target percentage. The team recommends that City High use this objective as a continuous point of growth rather than an end point. From a comprehensive stand point though, it is clear

that the school “does not bend to the wind,” in the words of one internal coordinator, but rather continually strives for its next best.

B.2. Action Plan for Objective #1:

Does the action plan:	YES	NO
Include strategies/action steps that are comprehensive in scope?	X	
Address as many aspects of the institution’s programs, activities, and services as appropriate?	X	
Address the entire student population?	X	
Include a logical sequence of strategies and/or action steps?	X	
Include enough activities to ensure that the objective will be achieved?	X	
Exclude major action steps?		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 plans for obsolescence; identifies the activities that will cease (and when that will occur) so that the additional activities can be added?	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?	X	
Outline clearly and in detail the action steps to be taken in the first two to three years of the plan?	X	
Appear to be reasonable and achievable?	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?

- The action plan includes major action steps as part of its plan, and the team finds such an inclusion advantageous. The action plan for Objective #1 has been broken down into 4 subsections: team skills, content/application, culture of best practices, and professional development/teacher support. Each of these has a chart filled with implementation plans.

B.3. Student Performance Objective #2:

Objective 2: Increasing the Rigor of the Academic Program at City High

An effective strategy for meeting the goal of **Increasing the Rigor of the Academic Program at City High** will be to encourage and support faculty as they look deeper into their practice, particularly by examining lessons and student work. Team members from the various content areas, including Cultural Literacy, Scientific Literacy, Technology and Financial Literacy, will identify tasks that provide the potential for engaging students in rigorous activities, use those tasks to build a common understanding regarding City High expectations and analyze student work resulting from engagement in those tasks.

This objective allows us to build on the successful work done through the last Middle States process in ensuring students buy into our program and in developing a comprehensive, individualized professional development program. The Action Plan that follows is broken down into the following areas:

- Across the Curriculum
- Scientific Literacy
- Cultural Literacy
- Financial Literacy

The definition of **A Rigorous Learning Experience** that City High staff will use to guide their work:

A student at City High is considered to be involved in a rigorous learning experience if that student is fully engaged in a personally challenging activity that requires applying knowledge, analyzing information, evaluating situations and/or creating products derived from new understandings. Therefore, in the long run the student will be more involved with designing, hypothesizing, concluding and critiquing and less involved with memorizing, tabulating, recalling and labeling. Successful engagement in these classroom experiences should result in the student developing a proficiency with a clear learning objective that is connected with prior experiences and prepares the student for experiences to come.

Academic Rigor Benchmarks

Goals/Benchmarks

By 2021, City High graduates will have developed the academic skills needed to succeed in post high school environments, whether four or two year college or trade schools or employment, as measured by

- 1) By 2021, City High will have improved performance of all students in each cohort on the Mathematics Keystone exam so as to meet Pennsylvania's new definition of closing the

achievement gap. This requires the percent of student's not meeting proficiency be cut in half within six years, with 2013 being the baseline year.

Baseline: 46% of students proficient or advanced in Algebra at the end of junior year.

- 2) By 2021, City High will have improved performance of all students in each cohort on the Literature Keystone exam so as to meet Pennsylvania's new definition of closing the achievement gap. This requires the percent of student's not meeting proficiency be cut in half within six years, with 2013 being the baseline year.

Baseline: 57.1% of students proficient or advanced in Literature at the end of junior year.

- 3) By 2021, City High will have improved performance of students defined by Pennsylvania as traditionally under-performing (ELL, Special Ed, Low Income) in each cohort on the Mathematics Keystone exam so as to meet Pennsylvania's new definition of closing the achievement gap. This requires the percent of traditionally underperforming student's not meeting proficiency be cut in half within six years, with 2013 being the baseline year.

Baseline: 43% of City High students defined as traditionally under-performing were proficient or advanced in Algebra by the end of the junior year.

- 4) By 2021, City High will have improved performance of students defined by Pennsylvania as traditionally under-performing (ELL, Special Ed, Low Income) in each cohort on the Literature Keystone exam so as to meet Pennsylvania's new definition of closing the achievement gap. This requires the percent of traditionally underperforming student's not meeting proficiency be cut in half within six years, with 2013 being the baseline year.

Baseline: 48.4% of City High students defined as traditionally under-performing were proficient or advanced in Literature by the end of the junior year.

- 5) By 2021, City High will have improved performance of all students in each cohort on the Biology Keystone exam so as to meet Pennsylvania's new definition of closing the achievement gap. This requires the percent of student's not meeting proficiency be cut in half within six years, with 2013 being the baseline year.

Baseline: 21.2% of students proficient or advanced in Biology at the end of junior year.

- 6) By 2021, City High will have improved performance of students defined by Pennsylvania as traditionally under-performing (ELL, Special Ed, Low Income) in each cohort on the Biology Keystone exam so as to meet Pennsylvania's new definition of closing the achievement gap. This requires the percent of traditionally underperforming student's not meeting proficiency be cut in half within six years, with 2013 being the baseline year.

Baseline: 15.1% of City High students defined as traditionally underperforming were proficient or advanced in Biology by the end of the junior year.

- 7) By 2021, 100% of City High graduates will either demonstrate proficiency in mathematics through the Keystone mathematics exam, or through successful completion of a state

designed project during their senior year.

Baseline: In 2012, 100% of City High graduates demonstrated proficiency in mathematics through the PSSA's or City High exit exams.

8) By 2021, 100% of City High graduates will either demonstrate proficiency Literature through the Keystone literature exam, or through successful completion of a state designed project during their senior year.

Baseline: In 2012, 100% of City High graduates demonstrated proficiency in Literature through the PSSA's or City High exit exams.

9) By 2021, 100% of City High graduates will either demonstrate proficiency in social studies through the Keystone social studies exam, or through successful completion of a state designed project during their senior year.

Baseline: Keystone exams will not be available in social studies until 2015

	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 rigor objective focuses the entire school community on the continuous improvement of professional practice. To quote Collins, "the enemy of good is great." City High has purposefully taken on the challenge of being great. They recognize that they have not yet achieved greatness in all areas but that has not dissuaded them from their pursuit.

- One shortcoming of the teacher looping paradigm is that teachers do not teach the same content year after year. The lesson study process will support the vertical articulation of the curriculum by allowing colleagues who are teaching the same content area but different grade levels to focus on the essential skills of each grade level.
- The rigor goals are uniform in that each requires the reduction of non-proficient students by half within seven years. It would be advantageous to prioritize which areas need the most immediate attention for the purposes of helping the most students.

B.4. Action Plan for Objective #2:

Does the action plan:	YES	NO
Include strategies/action steps that are comprehensive in scope?	X	
Address as many aspects of the institution’s programs, activities, and services as appropriate?	X	
Address the entire student population?	X	
Include a logical sequence of strategies and/or action steps?	X	
Include enough activities to ensure that the objective will be achieved?	X	
Exclude major action steps?	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 plans for obsolescence; identifies the activities that will cease (and when that will occur) so that the additional activities can be added?	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?	X	
Outline clearly and in detail the action steps to be taken in the first two to three years of the plan?	X	
Appear to be reasonable and achievable?	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?

- An important growth point for instruction is the timely sharing of student performance

data with their teachers. In the interview with the rigor objective planning team, the co-chairs explained how data supplied to the 9th grade teacher cohort has helped them to focus on the comparative weakness of this year's ninth grades students with regard to their reading competence.

- It will be important to carefully monitor the progress of the school with regard to this objective. There are numerous action plans that will require careful monitoring.

B.5. Student Performance Objective #3:

Successful Post High School Transition

Successful Post High School Transition at City High ensures that every student graduating is equipped to pursue options that are aligned with their academic, social and technological strengths and interests. Those pursuits include two and four year post secondary institutions, training programs, the military and employment. This objective will allow us to build upon the successful work done through the advisory program, career class, internship program and the transition department. It will also allow us to increase staff, student and parent understanding of the Pittsburgh Promise application requirements beginning at grade 9. Additionally, the development of a City High Alumni network allows us to maintain engagement with our graduates through post high school visits and invitations to participate in alumni forums for current students.

The Action Plan that follows is broken down into the following key areas:

- Action Advisory
- Pittsburgh Promise Eligibility
- Post High School Options
- Alumni Component

The definition of **Successful Post High School Transition** that City High staff will use to guide their work:

A student at City High is considered to have a successful post high school transition plan if that student has fully engaged in researching a post high school option that is aligned with their strengths and interest, has applied and been accepted, has applied and been granted the appropriate financial assistance, has solidified the selected option by scheduling courses and paying deposits, and has a transportation plan to get to the designated post high school option, or has secured full-time employment.

Successful engagement in these transition activities will result in a student graduating from City High prepared for transition with a clear vision of the steps necessary to complete their post high school option.

Successful Post High School Transition Goals/Benchmarks

By 2021, students graduating from City Charter High School will have experienced a meaningful internship, developed a successful post high school plan and remain in pursuit of their post high school option one year after graduation

- 1. 90% of students in each cohort will complete the internship experience with a grade of B or higher
 - o Baseline Year – 2012 – 2013
 - o Baseline Data – 91%

- 2. 90% of students in each cohort will indicate a positive correlation between their internship experience and their post high school plan
 - o Baseline Year – 2012 – 2013
 - o Baseline Data – 94% of students show a positive correlation between their internship experience and their post high school plan.

- 3. 75% of students in each cohort (who we have information on) will be on track or will have achieved their post high school plan students who pursue higher education will be on track to receive a Bachelor’s Degree with 6 years
 - o Baseline Year – 2013
 - o Baseline Data – 70% of the class of 2007, 68% of the class of 2009 and 66% of the class of 2010 who have started a 4 year post-secondary program have graduated or on track to graduate within 6 years of their start date.

- 4. 90% of students who leave City High with a transition plan (all graduates have a transition plan) are still engaged with that plan in the autumn one year after their graduation date.
 - o Baseline Year – Class of 2012
 - o Baseline Data – 80.2% of graduates of the Class of 2012 were still engaged with their transition plan in September of 2013.

- 5. 90% of graduating students who are eligible by residency will meet the QPA and attendance requirements that will ensure eligibility for the Pittsburgh Promise program or its extension.
 - o Baseline Year – 2012 – 2013
 - o Baseline Data – 74%

	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	X	

	YES	NO
expectations for the school's students?		
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?

- NONE

B.6. Action Plan for Objective #3:

Does the action plan:	YES	NO
Include strategies/action steps that are comprehensive in scope?	X	
Address as many aspects of the institution's programs, activities, and services as appropriate?	X	
Address the entire student population?	X	
Include a logical sequence of strategies and/or action steps?	X	
Include enough activities to ensure that the objective will be achieved?	X	
Exclude major action steps?		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 plans for obsolescence; identifies the activities that will cease (and when that will occur) so that the additional activities can be added?		X

Does the action plan:	YES	NO
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?	X	
Outline clearly and in detail the action steps to be taken in the first two to three years of the plan?	X	
Appear to be reasonable and achievable?	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?

- There were no action steps missing from the plan.
- Transition is an area the City Charter wishes to improve, but this is not an area that could be construed as a weakness.
- The team does not feel that the goal of planning and tracking the experiences of the students will ever become obsolete.

B.7. Student Performance Objective #4

Objective 4: School Safety and Security

School safety has been a point of emphasis for City High since its inception. A safe and secure environment is viewed as essential to learning. The goal of this objective is to assess, build and strengthen the security measures integral to City High so that students and staff remain and feel safe within the school environment and during school sponsored activities. For the purpose of the Middle State Process, the objective of School Safety and Security is thought of in four major categories: Traditional School Safety; School Technology; Trust Between Students and Staff; and Assessment.

School Safety:

City High has always viewed safety and security in a comprehensive, holistic manner. The strategic and more traditional assets (cameras, locked doors, fire drills, security officers) have been greatly enhanced over the period of the school’s existence. It is imperative that daily procedures continue to be improved and reviewed by the school on an annual basis. To improve comprehensive school safety each year, staff must be aware of school emergency procedures as defined in the All Hazards Plan. The All Hazards Plan was created to provide strategic emergency procedures in the event of a major school emergency. School staff must be aware of their role during the event of an emergency.

School Technology:

Given the importance of technology at City High, attention to all of the necessary security measures is continually monitored and improved. City High will continue to monitor the following to ensure technological security and safety for staff and students: strong passwords and password policies; updating network hardware with necessary security access policies; end user protection from current and future attacks; proper monitoring of usage, traffic, current and upcoming trends; and ongoing end user training on keeping data safer.

Trust between Students and Staff:

A vital part of school safety is the relationship and trust between staff and students. This is enhanced through the looping process, advisory program, the presence of two full-time counselors dedicated to helping students with their range of issues, and also an administration deeply involved in their lives as well as other measures that make the school more than a building.

Assessment:

Our objective is to make sure that all school stakeholders feel secure as measured by real assessments. While no school can anticipate every circumstance, City High will be able to face the future knowing that it was caring, thorough and responsible on the objective of school safety and security.

The Action Plan that follows is broken down into the following areas, each of the areas listed above are embedded into one of these categories:

- General School Safety
- Network Security
- School Safety-Students
- School Safety-Staff

School Safety Benchmarks

NOTE: Some of the benchmarks for school safety are based on answers to a survey that is still in development and will be administered in the fall of 2014. By 2021, City High will have in place a physical and technological safety plan that acts on its core belief that a safe school environment is essential. This will be measured by:

- 1) As a lead up to the effort to improve school safety, City High conducted a risk assessment through the Pennsylvania State Police. That risk assessment is included in the appendix. The school safety committee has reviewed the risk assessment report and has fashioned the action plan to address its recommendations. By 2021 City High will implement all reasonable recommendations included in the risk assessment that are vital to the security of the school.

- 2) In 2013 City High conducted a network security audit by Vital Solutions Inc. (which will continue to audit the network every 2-3 years). The audit is included in the appendix. Based on the report, the School Technology Manager made recommendations to school administration and the school safety committee. These recommendations are reflected in the action plan. By 2021 City High will implement the recommendations which are vital to the technological security of the school.
- 3) By 2021, 90% of City High’s staff will receive scores of proficient or advanced on an annual assessment developed by City High’s school safety committee to determine awareness and mastery of City High’s security and emergency procedures. (Baseline to be determined by survey)
- 4) By 2021, more than 90% of City High students will respond as agreeing or strongly agreeing with questions regarding City High providing a safe environment through an annual survey provided by an outside organization. (Baseline to be determined by survey)
- 5) By 2021, more than 90% of City High staff will respond as agreeing or strongly agreeing with questions regarding City High providing a safe environment through an annual survey provided by an outside organization. (Baseline to be determined by survey)
- 6) By 2021, more than 90% of City High parents will respond as agreeing or strongly agreeing with questions regarding City High providing a safe environment through an annual survey provided by an outside organization. (Baseline will be provided)

	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	

	YES	NO
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?

- Conduct survey (as listed in Action Plan) to provide baseline data.

B.8. Action Plan for Objective #4:

Does the action plan:	YES	NO
Include strategies/action steps that are comprehensive in scope?	X	
Address as many aspects of the institution's programs, activities, and services as appropriate?	X	
Address the entire student population?	X	
Include a logical sequence of strategies and/or action steps?	X	
Include enough activities to ensure that the objective will be achieved?	X	
Exclude major action steps?	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 plans for obsolescence; identifies the activities that will cease (and when that will occur) so that the additional activities can be added?	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?	X	
Outline clearly and in detail the action steps to be taken in the first two to three years of the plan?	X	
Appear to be reasonable and achievable?	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

C. THE VISITING TEAM'S OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS—THE PLAN FOR GROWTH AND IMPROVEMENT

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
Two to four measurable student performance objectives	X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One or more assessments for each objective 	X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseline data for at least one assessment for each objective 	X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.

- City High has a clear plan for growth and improvement. They have a dedicated staff, sufficient time to meet their needs, and a vision for the future.

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:

- None

Recommended Monitoring Issues:

In this section, the Team lists any requirements of the protocol for the Plan for Growth and Improvement—Student Performance Objectives and Action Plans—that require monitoring. Monitoring issues refer to elements of Student Performance Objectives and Action Plans required by the protocol that are not completely absent but are met only partially and are either in need of completion or improvement. Monitoring issues must be corrected by mid-term in the school’s accreditation.

No.	Requirement of the Protocol	Action Recommended
	NONE	

Recommended Stipulations:

In this section, the Team lists any requirements for the Plan for Growth and Improvement—Student Performance Objectives and Action Plans—that are absent and, therefore, must be added as a stipulation to the school’s accreditation.

No.	Requirement of the Protocol	Action Recommended
	NONE	

THE MIDDLE STATES STANDARDS FOR ACCREDITATION

INTRODUCTION

The self-assessment of the degree to which the school meets the Middle States Standards for Accreditation 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 12 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.

Standards for Accreditation for Schools: Elementary, Middle, High, and PreK-12 Institutions

- Standard 1: Philosophy/Mission
- Standard 2: Governance and Leadership
- Standard 3: School Improvement Planning
- Standard 4: Finances
- Standard 5: Facilities
- Standard 6: School Climate and Organization
- Standard 7: Health and Safety
- Standard 8: Educational Program
- Standard 9: Assessment and Evidence of Student Learning
- Standard 10: Student Services
- Standard 11: Student Life and Student Activities
- Standard 12: Information Resources and Technology

PHILOSOPHY/MISSION STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION

The Standard: The school has a clearly written and actively implemented statement of philosophy/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 philosophy/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 philosophy/mission	X
Samples of publications that communicate the mission/philosophy 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 philosophy/mission	X
6 Core Beliefs	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.

- 1. The Team's general observations regarding the school's adherence to this Standard for Accreditation and its Indicators of Quality.**

The Visiting Team observed that:

- City High truly lives its mission. One of the founders currently serves as a full time principal. The programs that aim to make students active members of the community abound. The school earnestly strives to meet its goal of reaching the students who typically fall in the “middle” (as explained by the CEO) rather than at the top or gifted ranks or low or at risk levels. One student explained that the school “prepares you for experiences after high school,” which is the intention of the founders.
- The teacher “looping” that occurs (where each graduating class has the same team of teachers throughout their four year stay) creates a “supportive, academically rigorous environment by recognizing and nurturing individual talents, needs, and skills” (as stated in the mission).

- 2. The Team's observations regarding areas in which the school exceeds the requirements of this Standard and its Indicators of Quality.**

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

- Of the 460 students surveyed, only 40 did not believe that they know the mission of their 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:

- NONE

Recommended Monitoring Issues:

In this section, the Team lists any requirements of this Standard and/or its Indicators of Quality that require ongoing monitoring. Monitoring Issues refer to requirements that are

not completely absent but that are met only partially and are either in need of completion or improvement. Monitoring issues must be addressed satisfactorily by the mid-term of the school's term of accreditation.

No.	Requirement of the Standard or Indicator	Recommended Action
	NONE	

Recommended Stipulations:

In this section, the Team lists any requirement(s) of this Standard and/or its Indicators of Quality that the school does not meet and, therefore, must be added as a stipulation to the school's accreditation.

No.	Requirement of the Standard or Indicator	Recommended Action
	NONE	

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 head of the institution and other key administrative personnel	X
Appraisal tool and/or description of the process used to appraise the performance of the head of the institution	X
Chart of lines of authority/responsibilities	
Policies related to governance and leadership	X
<i>For independent, non-public, and proprietary institutions only</i>	
Names, addresses, and organizational position of the institution's owners	
Names, address, affiliation of the members of the board of governance	

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.

1. The Team's general observations regarding the school's adherence to this Standard for Accreditation and its Indicators of Quality.

The Visiting Team observed that:

- The organization has a coherent organizational structure. The teaming approach modeled in classroom instruction is mirrored in administration. There is a shared administration office that allows for easy collaboration among the administrative staff.
- The leadership staff practices an open door policy. Students do visit the administrative offices to ask questions and obtain assistance. The administrative team works closely together and seems to have a healthy respect for one another.
- The principal/CEO has focused significant attention on making sure that the culture of City High is ingrained in all staff members. He said, "We want to make sure that our culture and best practices stay intact. We will learn from mistakes and continue to improve. If the culture is going to be maintained and grow, our staff has to understand it. When other people besides the CEO understand the workings of the school, others would be able to take over."
- It should be noted that staff at City High are "at will" employees. That is, there are no unionized employees. The CEO and Board of Directors have purposefully developed extremely clear criteria for promotion and evaluation of employees.
- The Board directly employs the principal/CEO. All other employees are hired by the principal/CEO. The Board is appointed by the school leadership. As such, they provide oversight but do not micromanage the school. The board approves bids, and major policies. For example, they annually approve the student handbook and staff handbook.

2. The Team's observations regarding areas in which the school exceeds the requirements of this Standard and its Indicators of Quality.

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

- It is evident that the leadership cares deeply about the success of the school. There is a tangible sense that the leadership is "on a mission" together to educate the students in their charge.

- The learning environment is purposefully designed.
- The principal/CEO has thoughtfully implemented opportunities for shared leadership. The leadership team meets weekly and has an open agenda that allows for teachers to contribute agenda items.
- There is substantial evidence that the Board of Directors is informed regularly about trends and events that substantially impact the success of the school.
- The Metrics page provided to board members at their monthly meetings is particularly well formed and keeps members apprised of the school’s progress.
- The fund balance developed allows City High to act quickly with regard to capital expenses when the need arises. Likewise the lease arrangement with the building landlord helps to limit unexpected physical plant expenses.
- The fiscal responsibility and restraint demonstrated by the board is appropriate in the light of increased contributions to PSERS and inconsistencies of funding for charter schools.

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:

- NONE

Recommended Monitoring Issues:

In this section, the Team lists any requirements of this Standard and/or its Indicators of Quality that require ongoing monitoring. Monitoring Issues refer to requirements that are not completely absent but that are met only partially and are either in need of completion or improvement. Monitoring issues must be addressed satisfactorily by the mid-term of the school’s term of accreditation.

No.	Requirement of the Standard or Indicator	Recommended Action
	NONE	

Recommended Stipulations:

In this section, the Team lists any requirement(s) of this Standard and/or its Indicators of Quality the school does not meet and, therefore, must be added as a stipulation to the school’s accreditation.

No.	Requirement of the Standard or Indicator	Recommended Action
	NONE	

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 philosophy/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

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.

1. The Team's general observations regarding the school's adherence to this Standard for Accreditation and its Indicators of Quality.

The Visiting Team observed that:

- Staff implements a looping process with the students; follows the students through their four year education, 9-12th grades.
- CCHS has implemented a rubric for teachers to follow as an annual review and/or promotional criteria
- Transition staff is utilized for each student
- Project-Based assignments relative to life skills
- Career Class begins in 9th grade to explore an interest in a career
- Continues to 10th grade where they begin to plan for a career so that by 11th grade they have a better idea of a career interest
- Offers a competitive Internship opportunity to students

2. The Team's observations regarding areas in which the school exceeds the requirements of this Standard and its Indicators of Quality.

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

- Staff implements a looping process with the students; follows the students through their four year education, 9-12th grades.

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:

- None

Recommended Monitoring Issues:

In this section, the Team lists any requirements of this Standard and/or its Indicators of Quality that require ongoing monitoring. Monitoring Issues refer to requirements that are not completely absent but that are met only partially and are either in need of completion or improvement. Monitoring issues must be addressed satisfactorily by the mid-term of the school's term of accreditation.

No.	Requirement of the Standard or Indicator	Recommended Action
	NONE	

Recommended Stipulations:

In this section, the Team lists any requirement(s) of this Standard and/or its Indicators of Quality the school does not meet and, therefore, must be added as a stipulation to the school's accreditation.

No.	Requirement of the Standard or Indicator	Recommended Action
	NONE	

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)	N/A
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	X
Summary of the institution's insurance coverage (for main campus and each branch)	X
Policies related to finances, financial aid, and refunds	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.

1. The Team's general observations regarding the school's adherence to this Standard for Accreditation and its Indicators of Quality.

The Visiting Team observed that:

- All financials are shared regularly via the monthly board meetings and consistent annual reports.
- The CEO, principals, an outside account, and the internal business managers work to share budget responsibilities. The CEO aims to, in his words, "broaden the base" of the financial realm of the school. Other stakeholders agree that financial responsibilities are appropriately shared.

2. The Team's observations regarding areas in which the school exceeds the requirements of this Standard and its Indicators of Quality.

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

- All staff surveyed believe that the stakeholders have input in financial decisions and that administration exercises prudent control over financial decisions.
- As explained in the self-study, "Edsys' nine-member Board of Directors, the non-profit organization that has fiduciary responsibility of City Charter High School, retains an independent audit firm. Annual audit have been conducted every year of the school's existence and the 2012-2013 audit resulted in an unqualified report and management letter indicating no material weakness in the school's financial management/operations."

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:

- NONE

Recommended Monitoring Issues:

In this section, the Team lists any requirements of this Standard and/or its Indicators of Quality that require ongoing monitoring. Monitoring Issues refer to requirements that are not completely absent but that are met only partially and are either in need of completion or improvement. Monitoring issues must be addressed satisfactorily by the mid-term of the school's term of accreditation.

No.	Requirement of the Standard or Indicator	Recommended Action
	NONE	

Recommended Stipulations:

In this section, the Team lists any requirement(s) of this Standard and/or its Indicators of Quality the school does not meet and, therefore, must be added as a stipulation to the school's accreditation.

No.	Requirement of the Standard or Indicator	Recommended Action
	NONE	

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

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
Floor plan of facilities	X
Long-range facilities plan	
Maintenance/repair schedules	
Plans for any facilities improvements	
Policies related to facilities	

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.

1. The Team's general observations regarding the school's adherence to this Standard for Accreditation and its Indicators of Quality.

The Visiting Team observed that:

- The building is clean and attractive.
- The bathrooms look and smell clean throughout the day.
- City Charter is a tenant of the building; therefore the burden of upkeep and maintenance falls to the landlord.
- Although the stairwells are very cramped for the number of people in the building, the schedule and the design of the classroom layout limits the necessity of vertical movement.

2. The Team's observations regarding areas in which the school exceeds the requirements of this Standard and its Indicators of Quality.

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

- The space includes adequate rooms for classes plus multiple small rooms peppered throughout the school for meetings, small groups, and individual projects.

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:

- Continue to work on creative ways of dealing with the small stairwell issue.

Recommended Monitoring Issues:

In this section, the Team lists any requirements of this Standard and/or its Indicators of Quality that require ongoing monitoring. Monitoring Issues refer to requirements that are not completely absent but that are met only partially and are either in need of completion or improvement. Monitoring issues must be addressed satisfactorily by the mid-term of the school's term of accreditation.

No.	Requirement of the Standard or Indicator	Recommended Action
	NONE	

Recommended Stipulations:

In this section, the Team lists any requirement(s) of this Standard and/or its Indicators of Quality the school does not meet and, therefore, must be added as a stipulation to the school's accreditation.

No.	Requirement of the Standard or Indicator	Recommended Action
	NONE	

SCHOOL CLIMATE AND ORGANIZATION 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)	
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.

1. The Team's general observations regarding the school's adherence to this Standard for Accreditation and its Indicators of Quality.

The Visiting Team observed that:

- City Charter clearly has a scope and sequence delineating which skills are appropriately taught at which grade level.
 - Staff to student ratio is adequate and working well.
 - There is a clearly defined system with one principal overseeing the faculty of each individual grade level. The CEO is then the supervisor of all other principals.
 - There is a system in place for continued teacher professional development for teachers.
 - Staff are evaluated annually.
2. The Team's observations regarding areas in which the school exceeds the requirements of this Standard and its Indicators of Quality.

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

- The climate of the school does reflect and facilitate its core values. Every aspect of the schedule and class selection is geared toward helping students prepare for life after high 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:

- NONE

Recommended Monitoring Issues:

In this section, the Team lists any requirements of this Standard and/or its Indicators of Quality that require ongoing monitoring. Monitoring Issues refer to requirements that are not completely absent but that are met only partially and are either in need of completion or improvement. Monitoring issues must be addressed satisfactorily by the mid-term of the school's term of accreditation.

No.	Requirement of the Standard or Indicator	Recommended Action
	NONE	

Recommended Stipulations:

In this section, the Team lists any requirement(s) of this Standard and/or its Indicators of Quality the school does not meet and, therefore, must be added as a stipulation to the school's accreditation.

No.	Requirement of the Standard or Indicator	Recommended Action
	NONE	

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	
Record of emergency drills	X
Emergency Procedures section of Faculty Handbook	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.

1. The Team's general observations regarding the school's adherence to this Standard for Accreditation and its Indicators of Quality.

The Visiting Team observed that:

- Students stated they felt safe
- Security Guard at Entrance
- All staff and Students have Security Tag for entry into areas
- Students have limited access to certain areas
- Plan to install glass enclosure at front entrance for added security
- Record of emergency drills well documented
- Health & Safety Inspections discussed
- Will be instituting a Flipchart for faculty to use in classrooms as emergencies arise

2. The Team's observations regarding areas in which the school exceeds the requirements of this Standard and its Indicators of Quality.

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

- Well thought-out emergency procedures
- Security Officer monitors Surveillance cameras from home when necessary

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:

- None

Recommended Monitoring Issues:

In this section, the Team lists any requirements of this Standard and/or its Indicators of Quality that require ongoing monitoring. Monitoring Issues refer to requirements that are not completely absent but that are met only partially and are either in need of completion or improvement. Monitoring issues must be addressed satisfactorily by the mid-term of the school's term of accreditation.

No.	Requirement of the Standard or Indicator	Recommended Action
	NONE	

Recommended Stipulations:

In this section, the Team lists any requirement(s) of this Standard and/or its Indicators of Quality the school does not meet and, therefore, must be added as a stipulation to the school's accreditation.

No.	Requirement of the Standard or Indicator	Recommended Action
	NONE	

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.

1. The Team's general observations regarding the school's adherence to this Standard for Accreditation and its Indicators of Quality.

The Visiting Team observed that:

- Core subjects taught with a team of teachers
- Course work is aligned with student interest
- Transition to higher education is evident with Internships planned for Junior into Senior year
- English curriculum is aligned with History timeline for more meaningful instruction through scaffolding and differentiation
- Use of rubrics that continue to increase in ability levels as students' grade level increases
- Comprehensive finals – prepares them for college finals
- After school study lab for students to get help
- Peer Tutoring Club implemented
- Career Class prepares them for interviews, how to dress, etc.
- Senior High Independent Study to develop time management skills

2. The Team's observations regarding areas in which the school exceeds the requirements of this Standard and its Indicators of Quality.

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

- Transition to higher education is evident with Internships planned for Junior into Senior year
- Career Class prepares them for interviews, how to dress, speak, etc.

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:

- None

Recommended Monitoring Issues:

In this section, the Team lists any requirements of this Standard and/or its Indicators of Quality that require ongoing monitoring. Monitoring Issues refer to requirements that are not completely absent but that are met only partially and are either in need of completion or improvement. Monitoring issues must be addressed satisfactorily by the mid-term of the school's term of accreditation.

No.	Requirement of the Standard or Indicator	Recommended Action
	NONE	

Recommended Stipulations:

In this section, the Team lists any requirement(s) of this Standard and/or its Indicators of Quality the school does not meet and, therefore, must be added as a stipulation to the school's accreditation.

No.	Requirement of the Standard or Indicator	Recommended Action
	NONE	

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	
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.

1. The Team's general observations regarding the school's adherence to this Standard for Accreditation and its Indicators of Quality.

The Visiting Team observed that:

- Classroom observations support that students participate in significant learning opportunities.
- Honors course designations are awarded to students who complete additional work within the regular heterogeneous classroom.
- A clear academic report card is provided to each student's family at the end of each trimester.
- Visits with students support that all students are actively engaged in academic work. Students feel that they have significant learning to accomplish each day.
- The teaching staff understands that it is their responsibility to teach students. One teacher commented, "I came in as a math teacher. I thought my job was to teach math. In fact, my job is to teach students "
- The staff at City High have determined that every class should have a final exam that is equally rigorous to those of core classes. The exams should mimic the experience of a college class.
- One adult commented, "Not every kids makes it, but it is not for lack of trying on the part of the adults here."

2. The Team's observations regarding areas in which the school exceeds the requirements of this Standard and its Indicators of Quality.

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

- The school has determined that the grade of D is failing. Standards are high at the school.
- Students interviewed routinely stated that their classes were challenging. One student stated, "they work us the entire day. There is no down time here." Another student stated, "there is never time to unwind."
- Students must pass at least 6 out of 8.5 credit units to move from 9th grade to 10th grade.
- Likewise a student must fail no more than 5 classes in grades 10 through 12 in order to graduate from CHS.

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:

- NONE

Recommended Monitoring Issues:

In this section, the Team lists any requirements of this Standard and/or its Indicators of Quality that require ongoing monitoring. Monitoring Issues refer to requirements that are not completely absent but that are met only partially and are either in need of completion or improvement. Monitoring issues must be addressed satisfactorily by the mid-term of the school's term of accreditation.

No.	Requirement of the Standard or Indicator	Recommended Action
	NONE	

Recommended Stipulations:

In this section, the Team lists any requirement(s) of this Standard and/or its Indicators of Quality the school does not meet and, therefore, must be added as a stipulation to the school's accreditation.

No.	Requirement of the Standard or Indicator	Recommended Action
	NONE	

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	
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.

1. The Team's general observations regarding the school's adherence to this Standard for Accreditation and its Indicators of Quality.

The Visiting Team observed that:

- Every student is required to complete a 13 week internship.
- Two counselors are available at all times to handle student issues as they arise.
- The transition coordinators help students choose their life path.

2. The Team's observations regarding areas in which the school exceeds the requirements of this Standard and its Indicators of Quality.

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

- The transition aspect of City Charter is truly remarkable. Teachers and transition specialists are providing an extremely high level of guidance to individual students about life goals and the necessary pathways to achieve those goals. This is undoubtedly improving the success rate of the 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:

- NONE

Recommended Monitoring Issues:

In this section, the Team lists any requirements of this Standard and/or its Indicators of Quality that require ongoing monitoring. Monitoring Issues refer to requirements that are not completely absent but that are met only partially and are either in need of completion or improvement. Monitoring issues must be addressed satisfactorily by the mid-term of the school's term of accreditation.

No.	Requirement of the Standard or Indicator	Recommended Action
	NONE	

Recommended Stipulations:

In this section, the Team lists any requirement(s) of this Standard and/or its Indicators of Quality the school does not meet and, therefore, must be added as a stipulation to the school's accreditation.

No.	Requirement of the Standard or Indicator	Recommended Action
	NONE	

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	N/A
Budget for all non-athletic activities	
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.

- 1. The Team's general observations regarding the school's adherence to this Standard for Accreditation and its Indicators of Quality.**

The Visiting Team observed that:

- City High's schedule incorporates an activity period two times per week. According to the students, club options include but are not limited to robotics, walking, illustration, cards, board games, volunteer, fantasy football, and sign language. There are, according to students, 3 out-of-school activities: SAGE, Robotics, and drama.
- 2. The Team's observations regarding areas in which the school exceeds the requirements of this Standard and its Indicators of Quality.**

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

- Each graduating class of no more than 180 functions as a cohort with "looping" teachers and administrators who instruct the students all four years of their career. As one sophomore explains, "we are one big family." The positive and rigorous environment, one centered on students who want to learn, provided by City High is notable. Another senior noted that the environment and expectations of the school have "shaped him in maturity" and that this school provides an experience unlike any other.
- The grade level trips (field experiences) are highly commendable. The students look forward to the trips and the experiences that they bring. The sophomores are "thrilled" (their word) for the spring trip to Washington D.C.
- Students consider the free bus pass for public transportation a great perk as they are able to use the pass to get to their jobs and recreational spots during after school hours.

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:

- When asked if students believed that their school offers a variety of activities via survey, 42 students indicated that City High does not meet this indicator and 99 thought the school only partially met the standard. The team recommends that the school add more activities, particularly those occurring outside of the school day, to gain increased student interest.

More out-of-school activities would allow a greater chance for students to mingle with other grade levels that they are separated from regularly. As there have been major attempts to incorporate more activities, specifically in the theatre field, the team recommends that the school continue to add more out of school activities reasonable within the school's resources.

- Students perceive a lack of school spirit. Typically sporting programs carry the brunt of school spirit. Due to the incapability of City High to house a sporting program, the team recommends injecting school spirit wherever possible. Several students propose selling student gear that they may proudly wear in the community.

Recommended Monitoring Issues:

In this section, the Team lists any requirements of this Standard and/or its Indicators of Quality that require ongoing monitoring. Monitoring Issues refer to requirements that are not completely absent but that are met only partially and are either in need of completion or improvement. Monitoring issues must be addressed satisfactorily by the mid-term of the school's term of accreditation.

No.	Requirement of the Standard or Indicator	Recommended Action
	NONE	

Recommended Stipulations:

In this section, the Team lists any requirement(s) of this Standard and/or its Indicators of Quality the school does not meet and, therefore, must be added as a stipulation to the school's accreditation.

No.	Requirement of the Standard or Indicator	Recommended Action
	NONE	

INFORMATION RESOURCES AND TECHNOLOGY 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	
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.

- 1. The Team's general observations regarding the school's adherence to this Standard for Accreditation and its Indicators of Quality.**

The Visiting Team observed that:

- The technology department is adequately staffed and provides appropriate resources to support instruction.
- The computer technology used at City High fulfills three functions; communication, information, and productivity.
- There is a supply of spare technology available to each grade level to support breakdowns that occasionally occur.
- The technology supplied to students supports the goal of students learning MS Office and the Adobe CS Suite.
- The technology staff take seriously the responsibility to provide nearly 100% up time of their network.

- 2. The Team's observations regarding areas in which the school exceeds the requirements of this Standard and its Indicators of Quality.**

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

- Classroom technology is available to support collaboration among students. Google Apps is used regularly by students and staff.
- The laptops that students use are not merely replacements to traditional text resources. Students are working on technology-rich lessons.
- The technology department is supported by student employees who apply and are hired by the school to support their peers.
- The use of the technology one to one initiative is appropriate to the needs of the school.
- Technology use is taught as a skill and integrated throughout the required curriculum.

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:

- A valuable and arguably essential 21st century skill is digital citizenship. City High should

seriously consider how to support the development of social media skills. Students should learn how to use their technology in an appropriate and continually relevant way.

- It is appropriate to carefully consider ways that other internet-enabled devices can be beneficial to the educational process, specifically student Smartphone use.
- Increasingly all adults will need to understand the underpinnings of computer programming. The curriculum does include website design. Consider expanding opportunities in design thinking.

Recommended Monitoring Issues:

In this section, the Team lists any requirements of this Standard and/or its Indicators of Quality that require ongoing monitoring. Monitoring Issues refer to requirements that are not completely absent but that are met only partially and are either in need of completion or improvement. Monitoring issues must be addressed satisfactorily by the mid-term of the school’s term of accreditation.

No.	Requirement of the Standard or Indicator	Recommended Action
	NONE	

Recommended Stipulations:

In this section, the Team lists any requirement(s) of this Standard and/or its Indicators of Quality the school does not meet and, therefore, must be added as a stipulation to the school’s accreditation.

No.	Requirement of the Standard or Indicator	Recommended Action
	NONE	

ACCREDITATION RECOMMENDATION

After its visit to the school, the Middle States Association's Visiting Team is charged with making a recommendation to the appropriate Commission(s) of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools regarding the accreditation action the Association 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 Association that it takes 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 City Charter High School 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 *Accreditation for Growth* 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 Teams**

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 *Accreditation for Growth* 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

The Visiting Team came to City Charter High School from a variety of backgrounds and school districts. Universally, we walked away highly impressed with what we observed. City High prides itself on being a progressive leader in education, and it is clear that they are walking their talk.

The strengths of City High are almost too numerous to mention. If there was one constant theme that we noticed throughout the week, it was the passion of the faculty and administration. The environment of City High reflects a seriousness and care at all levels. If you believe that you are going to come here and teach a subject and not a person, City High is not for you. Rather, every faculty member here is more than just a distributor of information. They are a counselor, a mentor, a psychologist, and a friend. They are here early and late. During their planning time, they are checking on students, making phone calls, and collaborating with their colleagues. Administrators are out in building constantly, rather than being buried away in their office. The founder of the school stands in a stairwell between every lunch period. Everyone is involved in a thoughtful structuring of the educational program, and the extensive time spent on professional development allows for all members of the staff to be involved in that process. This passion is infectious. Several students mentioned how they only came to City High because their parents made them. They unanimously said how glad they were about that choice. As one student said, "here, I am really challenged. I am so grateful for the preparation I am receiving for life."

Second, the Transitions Program that City High offers should be a model for other districts. With two full-time staff members devoted solely to helping students prepare for their post-high school career, City High is walking their talk. Beginning in the ninth grade year, every student takes a Career class that helps prepare them for applying for jobs and college. The Research class teaches the necessary skills a student will need to be successful writing in college. The Internship that begins during the third trimester of the junior year allows each student an opportunity to get a feel for a chosen field. The value of this experience cannot be understated. "I've explored two separate careers here, and I have an aptitude for both," said one senior. "The internship helped me to decide which one I want to focused on." The walls of City High are lined with success stories of past graduates, as well as a snapshot of the future for each graduating class. By the time that a student graduates from City High, they are well prepared for the future they have been working towards. However, City High does not believe that their job ends when a student walks out their door. They are concerned with making sure that their students not only graduate high school, but also find success in college and a career. Sometimes this process involves tough love- telling a student with an ACT score of 22, and a 2.4 GPA, that they should probably look someplace other than Harvard.

Finally, the school has developed an innovative educational program. As one freshman commented, “we have endless opportunities here” when it comes to academics. Every classroom has two teachers, allowing for collaboration and a stronger bond between students. The curriculum itself is innovative. Their Cultural Literacy class provides an opportunity to draw connections between History and English. They require all students to take Financial Literacy, helping to prepare them for real world topics such as credit cards, coupons, and budgeting. While they lack a library, they have four librarians who are integrated in the classroom to teach applicable skills during the Research Class. Every year, students have an opportunity to take a class trip to sites ranging from Washington DC to Costa Rica. These experiences give your students a valuable life experience that might be beyond their means otherwise. But beyond the people and the classes, City High has a schedule that thinks outside the box. While going to school in July is not ideal for most teenagers, they did admit that the trimester schedule helped with summer brain drain and gave them greater flexibility. The longer school day and school year allows for things such as silent study periods to help students prepare for the flexibility of a collegiate schedule. Also, the system of looping City High has implemented helps create a stronger sense of community between students and their teachers. These teachers have an opportunity to watch their students grow, and they also know where their students are coming from, and the best practices to get them where they are going. The unique program that City High offers truly offers an experience of high school at life speed.

All schools have room for improvement, and City High is no exception. After speaking with administrators, faculty, and students, the Visiting Team recognized several areas that City High can reflect on as areas of improvement.

First, a common theme that we heard from students was how they craved school spirit, but felt it was lacking at City High. While many schools closely associate school spirit with school sports, the unique program at City High makes this option a challenge. Students take pride in their school, and wish they had a way to demonstrate that pride through t-shirts, hoodies, and bags. While the gargoyle mascot was initially considered and ultimately rejected, looking into adding a mascot might give students something to rally around. As a charter school, City High has to market themselves to the greater public, and students are your greatest advocates. If they could demonstrate that school pride, it would go a long way.

Second, City High should look at ways to decrease student tardiness and absenteeism. As an urban school, the team recognizes the issues of getting students to be on time every day. Furthermore, City High makes a point that being tardy or absent in the workforce has much greater consequences than high school, and students should be preparing for that day. However, with over 50% of students being chronically tardy or absent, this message is clearly struggling to fall on fertile ground. City High has worked diligently to solve so many issues that affect their students. We are confident you can find a way to have a positive impact on student timeliness.

Third, while the looping system is a selling point of City High, it does provide some challenges. When students come to City High, they expect to have the same teachers every year. Unfortunately, the reality of education means this is not always possible. However, one student mentioned that “I feel gypped by the whole looping thing” because so many of her teachers left City High or were transferred to other teams. As much as possible, City High School should strive for retention in the looping process to maintain fidelity to the concept.

Given the chance, every member of the Visiting Team would work at City High. It is clearly an exceptional school with a dedicated faculty and student body. In the words of one sophomore, “I can’t imagine my high school life without City High.” The challenge moving forward is to continue their progress and remain on the cutting edge of education. After spending four days discussing, observing, listening, and reading about City High, the Visiting Team feels confident that the school is capable of meeting that challenge. We wish them luck moving forward.

VISITING TEAM ROSTER

Role	Name	School/Organization
Chair of the Team	Mr. John Lesjack Educational Specialist Butler Intermediate High School 551 Fairground Hill Road Butler, PA 16001 724-214-3400 John_lesjack@butler.k12.pa.us	Butler Area Intermediate High School
Team Member	Ms. Patricia Viale Department Chair Mount Lebanon High School 155 Cochran Road Pittsburgh, PA 15228 412-344-2003 PViale@mtlsd.net	Mount Lebanon High School
Team Member	Mrs. Elizabeth Klink Head of School Vision Quest Academy 555 S. Penn Road Franklin, PA 16323 814-432-7969 elizabeth.klink@vq.com	VisionQuest Academy
Team Member	Mr. Jeffrey Roberts Assistant Principal Seneca Valley Senior High School 128 Seneca School Road Harmony, PA 16037 724-452-6041 ROBERTSJT@svsd.net	Seneca Valley Senior High School
Team Member	Ms. Dawn Crawford Teacher Indiana Area Sr. High School 450 North Fifth Street Indiana, PA 15701 724-463-8562 dcrawford@iasd.cc	Indiana Area School District