

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

HENRY HUDSON REGIONAL SCHOOL
HIGHLANDS, NEW JERSEY

MARCH 24 – 27, 2015

LENORE M. KINGSMORE
PRINCIPAL

CHARLES G. BROZINA
CHAIR OF THE VISITING TEAM

3624 Market Street ♦ 2 West ♦ Philadelphia, PA 19104

Telephone: (267) 284-5000 FAX: (215) 662-0957

www.msa-cess.org

MSA
CESS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Introduction	1
The Context of School	4
<i>Visiting Team's Observations and Recommendations</i>	4
The Planning Process	6
<i>Planning Team</i>	7
<i>Role of the Internal Coordinators</i>	8
<i>Role of the School's Leadership</i>	9
<i>Role of the Governing Body</i>	9
<i>Communication and Awareness Activities</i>	10
<i>Periodic Reviews of the Plan for Growth and Improvement</i>	12
<i>Overall Assessment</i>	13
The Plan for Growth and Improvement	15
<i>Relationship to Other School Improvement Efforts</i>	16
<i>Mission, Beliefs, and Profile of Graduates</i>	16
<i>Mission</i>	17
<i>Beliefs</i>	18
<i>Profile of Graduates</i>	20
<i>Visiting Team's Recommendations</i>	23
<i>Student Performance Objectives and Action Plans</i>	24
<i>Visiting Team's Observations and Recommendations</i>	33
The Middle States Standards for Accreditation	35
<i>Philosophy/Mission</i>	36
<i>Governance and Leadership</i>	39
<i>School Improvement Planning</i>	43
<i>Finances</i>	46
<i>Facilities</i>	49
<i>School Climate and Organization</i>	52

	Page
<i>Health and Safety</i>	55
<i>Educational Program</i>	58
<i>Assessment and Evidence of Student Learning</i>	62
<i>Student Services</i>	65
<i>Student Life and Student Activities</i>	68
<i>Information Resources and Technology</i>	71
Accreditation Recommendation	74
Next Steps	75
Summary and Closure	77
Visiting Team Roster	84

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

- The information provided in the self-study reflects what the team saw and heard during the visit.
- The context provides an excellent description of the communities the school serves especially in describing the still lingering effects of Super Storm Sandy
- In an effort to boost enrollment the school is commended for its efforts to attract students from private schools as well as tuition students from other districts.
- Junior staff members who are current with the use of technology in the classroom are an asset to the school as they implement up-to-date instructional techniques.
- The school is commended for the significant percentage of staff members holding advanced degrees in their subject areas
- While the self-study indicated a need for improvement in the quantity of participation in and support for the school, the team found many actively involved and supportive parents

serving on the Planning Team, PTO, and the Board of Education.

- The school is commended for making AYP.
- A recent NJ School Performance report indicates that HHRS outperforms 62% of schools statewide as noted by its statewide percentile ranking and 52% of schools educating students with similar demographic characteristics as noted in its peer school percentile ranking in the performance area of students who begin high school four years earlier graduate within four years. Also included is a measure of the rate at which students in a particular school drop out of school.
- A six year trend shows a reduction in the percentage of students scoring Partially Proficient in the New Jersey High School Proficiency Assessment Language Arts Literacy with a reduction by half in 2013-2014 over 2012-2013.
- A six year trend shows improvement in the percentage of students scoring Advanced Proficient in the New Jersey High School Proficiency Assessment Language Arts Literacy with the current percentage more than double that of 2011-2012.
- 2013-2014 HSPA Mathematics showed a marked increase in the percentage of students scoring Advanced Proficient.
- 2013-2014 New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge show significant increases in the percentages of students scoring Advanced Proficient in both Language Arts and Mathematics.

Recommendations

- When the Planning Team revisits this portion of the Self-Study it may wish to include:
 - The high level of student and staff support for community service projects.
 - The high percentage of students and staff who participate in athletics and clubs.
 - The intense effort expended in the search for grant monies to provide resources not supported by the budget.

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:

- The Planning Team included a good cross-section of the staff throughout the building including building administration, teaching staff, central administration, students and parents.
- The Planning Team was selected from a pool of volunteers by the Internal Coordinators and the Administration.
- Students indicated that they felt their ideas were listened to and that the process felt "Open"
- Two students are selected from each grade, and students volunteer for a place on the Planning Team.

- The student members were typically approached and asked to volunteer if they had served on the student council as this usually means they are more involved and engaged.
- A parent member of the planning team stated, "...I've been very impressed with what the Principal has done – so I'm ready to roll up my sleeves for her. [to help]"
- The Planning Team generally used e-mail to communicate with one another, or personally during the school day; which is fairly easy as Hudson is a small school. (See communication for more detail).
- Parent volunteers typically came from the PTO, who have students at the school; graduates of the school; or both.
- Staff members volunteered to be on the committee, but engaged and enthusiastic staff members were targeted by the Internal Coordinators and the Administration.

The Visiting Team recommends:

- Adherence to the planned schedule of meetings and continued involvement of all stakeholders

B. Role of the Internal Coordinators

The Visiting Team observed:

- The Internal Coordinators sought volunteers from the community for the Planning Team.
- The Internal Coordinators planned for the Middle States visiting team to visit Henry Hudson High School.
- The internal coordinators fulfilled their role by providing the necessary energy, enthusiasm, and expertise to maintain cohesion among faculty, staff, students, parents, and administration regarding the completion of the Middle States AFG Accreditation protocol.
- The Internal Coordinators oversaw the Accreditation Team visit and maintained a timely schedule in order that the visiting team could meet their objectives.

The Visiting Team recommends:

- The Internal Coordinators may wish to continue to provide cohesion among faculty and staff as the Strategic Plan is implemented. An action step here might include providing feedback on the progress of the Planning and Action Teams.

C. Role of the School's Leadership

The Visiting Team observed:

- Consensus amongst all stakeholders that the current Leadership, namely the Principal, is a dynamic force that gets things done for the betterment of the school community.
- In regard to the Principal, one parent told us: “She listens, she promises the Earth, and she delivers!”
- The School Leadership along with the Internal Coordinators played an integral role in setting up the Planning Process.
- The Principal asked for volunteers for Internal Coordinators, and selected the most suitable staff from among the volunteers.
- The principal served as the link for the visiting team and made all accommodation arrangements. All other leaders supplied information when needed.
- School leadership overseeing the Middle States AFG planning progress.
- That leadership assisted in making the visit for the Middle States Team very comfortable.

The Visiting Team recommends:

- In accordance with the AFG protocol, School leadership should continue to involve its stakeholders in meaningful ways in the setting of goals, developing plans to achieve and measure those goals, and the implementation of those plans.

D. Role of the Governing Body

The Visiting Team observed:

- The Governing Body consists of the Board of Education and Central District personnel.
- The Governing Body assisted the Planning Team by arranging finances to accommodate the Middle States AFG process.
- The Governing Body is enthusiastic about the objectives and Strategic Plan, as they were deeply involved in the planning process and believe the objectives are achievable.
- The Governing Body believes that the location of the school is a strength that they can leverage, by developing partnerships with local colleges and industries and by continuing to develop programs that make use of the coastal location.
- The Governing Body believes in involving various stakeholders from the community and has involved local officials in their planning.
- They support the Principal in leading the way with the help of strong support from the community stakeholders.
- The Governing Body recently approved and brought on a Communications Officer who is working to publicize the school’s progress and initiatives.
- The Governing Body actively supports initiatives designed to increase student enrollment numbers.

The Visiting Team recommends:

- None.

E. Role of the External Facilitator

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

F. Communication and Awareness Activities

The Visiting Team observed:

- In order to obtain their input, the Planning Team provided all stakeholders with the opportunity to participate in a survey through “Survey Monkey.”
- The Planning Team informs stakeholders about planning initiatives through various mechanisms including: e-mail; personal interaction; Parent Portal; Robo-calls over the phone; a phone app.
- The recently hired communications officer shares information with the wider community.
- The Governing Body is committed to supporting efforts to communicate the school’s progress and initiative to the wider community.
- The school web page has been utilized to spread awareness of Middle States and Strategic Plan initiatives.

The Visiting Team recommends:

- None.

G. Action Plan Teams

X	The school did not use Action Plan Teams
---	--

The Visiting Team observed:

- The Planning Team served as a committee of the whole to develop the Action Plans.
- The AFG Student Performance Objectives are directly correlated with the school’s recently developed Strategic Plan.
- Staff members who helped develop the Strategic Plan were also members of the AFG Planning Team.

The Visiting Team recommends:

- None

H. Implementation Teams

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

The Visiting Team observed:

- HHRS is a small school with a close-knit, highly motivated group of staff, administrators, students, and parents who are dedicated to accomplishing the tasks outlined in the Action Plans.
- The AFG Planning Team will again serve as a committee of the whole to implement the Action Plans.

The Visiting Team recommends:

- None

I. Periodic Reviews of the Plan for Growth and Improvement

The Visiting Team observed:

- The wide range of stakeholders involved in the planning process will ensure that there are regular reviews of growth and improvement.
- The Governing Body and the School Administration are committed to implementing the Action Plans.
- The Planning Team has the resources to measure progress toward the achieving of the school's objectives.

The Visiting Team recommends:

- To assist in measuring steps on the journey of constantly striving for growth and improvement it would be useful to replace references to "ongoing" in the action plans with concrete dates which will serve as review intervals.
- The Planning Team should plan for celebrations as actions steps are implemented and objectives achieved.

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
---	--

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.

- Henry Hudson Regional High School meets the requirements of the AFG protocol for the Planning Process in that a variety of stakeholders were active participants and serious efforts were made to keep all stakeholders informed.
- A committed Team, led by a dynamic and effective Principal, has made great efforts to keep a high level of awareness, understanding of, and support for the Action Plan among the school’s community of stakeholders. Mechanisms for this include: monthly newsletters, Parent Advisory Council meetings, PTO meetings, BOE meetings, and Strategic Planning Meetings – which have been effective venues for keeping all stakeholders aware of the Planning Team’s work.

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 is aligned with the Henry Hudson Regional School’s Strategic Plan.
- The Strategic Plan has recently been developed and the *AFG* Student Performance Objectives (and the Actions needed to accomplish them) were designed so as not to have too many different projects underway at the same time.
- The Visiting Team has observed through interviews with the Superintendent, Staff and Board members that a Comprehensive Plan for school improvement has been aggressively implemented since the hiring of the current principal.
- Planning meetings with stakeholders are ongoing and frequently scheduled.
- The school is not a part of a parent system so there are no larger scale improvement efforts being undertaken.

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:

Henry Hudson Regional School provides a personalized learning experience that enables students to meet and exceed all content area learning standards by maintaining small class size; securing low student-to-teacher ratio; utilizing highly engaging curriculum that fosters academic achievement in a changing global, technological society; and embracing a strong partnership with its community. Henry Hudson students will be equipped with the skills needed:

- To develop self-esteem and character
- To communicate effectively
- To think critically to solve problems
- To learn respect for cultural differences
- To work cooperatively with others

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

- The school’s audience is its students.

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

- The school’s unique identity is its small class size and low student-to-teacher ratio.

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

- The aim and purpose of the school is foster academic achievement while equipping students with the myriad of skills necessary for them to be successful.

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

- The action of the school is identified in the strong action words and phrases that were well thought out: enable, exceed, embracing, develop, communicate, think critically, work cooperatively.

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

- As a means to accomplish its mission, HHRS has choses the maintaining of small class sizes utilizing a highly engaging curriculum.

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

- HHRS has its mission statement posted in the classrooms, gymnasiums and offices.
- Stakeholders indicated to the team that they understand and support the school's mission.

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:

We believe excellence in education includes all of the following beliefs:

We believe children learn best when

- Parents and students are accountable for their education.
- Lines of communication are open to parents and educators.
- Students are challenged to their maximum abilities.
- Children feel safe and accepted in their environment.
- The educational process is committed to excellence from the top down.

We believe the role of the community is to be active partners with the school district in the educational process. We believe the role of the parent/guardian is to provide a consistent and nurturing environment where education is valued. We believe the role of the staff is to inspire students to reach their fullest potential.

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 Beliefs are simply stated and to understand.
- The Beliefs properly begin with "We believe..." and bullets are provided to further define one belief.
- The Beliefs enforce the important relationship between students, educators and parents as a complete learning community.
- At its revisiting the Planning Team may wish to consider making this statement somewhat less education-specific.

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

- Interviews with students, teachers, administrators, and parents demonstrate a fundamental understanding of the Beliefs.
- Stakeholders are working together to ensure the Beliefs are inherent in reality.
- Administrators empower students and teachers to create a formative learning environment.
- Teachers embrace multiple and diverse responsibilities to provide students with a complete educational experience.

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

- HHRS provides a safe haven for students to enjoy the entire educational experience.
- Even though the school houses a relatively small student population, it takes great pains to provide students with the classes and extra-curricular activities enjoyed by its larger counterparts.
- Staff members create a cohesive learning and social facility in which students are recognized as individuals, each with his or her individual place within the entire community.

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:

1. Foundational Knowledge and Skills
 - a. Reading, writing and Mathematics
 - b. Thinking creatively
 - c. Making decisions
 - d. Solving problems
 - e. Learning in a changing technological society
2. Informational Knowledge and Skills
 - a. Acquiring and evaluating data
 - b. Interpreting and communicating data
 - c. Using technology to gain and process information
3. Technological Knowledge and Skills
 - a. Selecting appropriate technology/source for any given venture
 - b. Applying appropriate technology/source for any given venture
4. Personal Qualities
 - a. Independence in school/work responsibilities
 - b. Work ethics: punctuality, motivation, integrity and discipline
5. Interpersonal Skills
 - a. Working cooperatively and effectively with others

b. Recognizing and appreciating cultural differences

A Henry Hudson graduate will utilize the above competencies, gained through the educational programs and school community support, in order to continue their life's journey, whether that journey leads to further education, world of work or military career. The skills learned throughout their time at Henry Hudson will enable all graduates to be a valued and productive member of society.

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?**
- Based on the Profile of Graduates, Henry Hudson Regional School:
 - expects its students to competently demonstrate the myriad of skills necessary to succeed in a global environment
 - encourages its students to embrace technology
 - instills an appropriate work ethic for its students
 - creates a learning facility in which students and faculty work and communicate cooperatively.
 - A graduate will know how to read, write, compute mathematically, and think creatively.
 - A graduate will use his knowledge to make informed decisions, solve problems, and adapt to change.
 - The qualities by which a graduate will be recognized include being able to work independently and punctually with integrity and self-discipline.

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

- Based on the Team's observations and direct interviews, the schools stakeholders: students, teachers, parents, administrators, business owners, townspeople understand and support the school's Profile of Graduates.

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.

- The Belief Statement could become less education-specific.
- The school’s unique identity could be more creatively stated.
- The Mission Statement could be written to better reflect the observations of this Team that the entire school is a learning community where all stakeholders support each other’s efforts to learn and grow.
- The Visiting Team recommends that the Henry Hudson Regional School place its Mission statement and the Core Beliefs on the opening page of the school’s website. These and a link to the Profile of Graduates will provide anyone visiting the site with the knowledge that HHRS has committed and continues to commit itself to doing what is in the best interests of its students.

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:

By the year 2021, all general education students at Henry Hudson Regional School will demonstrate a strong academic foundation as measured by the following indicators:

Measurable Goals:

C.1.a. A 1% increase every year in the aggregate RIT (Rausch Unit) scores on the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) Mathematics Assessment for students who have not been identified as “at-risk” in grades 7-11. *In this objective, an “at-risk” student is identified as one who has scored in the low/low-average range on the MAP Mathematics 6+ Common Core assessment.*

C.1.b. A 2% increase every year in the aggregate RIT (Rausch Unit) scores on the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) Mathematics Assessment for students who have been identified as “at-risk” in grades 7-11. *In this objective, an “at-risk” student is identified as one who has scored in the low/low-average range on the MAP Mathematics 6+ Common Core assessment.*

C.1.c. A 1% increase every year in the aggregate RIT (Rausch Unit) scores on the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) Reading Assessment for students who have not been identified as “at-risk” in grades 7-11. *In this objective, an “at-risk” student is identified as one who has scored in the low/low-average range on the MAP Reading 6+ Common Core assessment.*

C.1.d. A 2% increase every year in the aggregate RIT (Rausch Unit) scores on the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) Reading Assessment for students who have been identified as “at-risk” in grades 7-11. *In this objective, an “at-risk” student is identified as one who has scored in the low/low-average range on the MAP Reading 6+ Common Core assessment.*

C.1.e. A 2% increase every year in the percentage of seniors who score above 1550 on the SAT, as measured by the NJ School Performance Report.

C.1.f. A 2% increase every year in the percentage of students who earn a score of “3” or higher on the following content-area Advanced Placement (AP) tests:

- English
- Math
- Social Studies
- Science

	YES	NO
Is the objective:		
Closely associated with the exit outcomes for students as expressed in the	X	

	YES	NO
Profile of Graduates, graduation requirements, and/or performance 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?

- While, on the surface, it appears that the 1% and 2% increases appear “easy targets” it means that over a seven-year period, the overall increases will be a formidable 7%-14%. We commend HHRS for – in an earlier manifestation of this objective – creating more ambitious goals, it is important to realize the goals are moving targets that may require changing over time. To this end the Team suggests that this objective be re-evaluated each year over the next three 3-5 years insofar as it pertains to the specific percentages of growth allocated to various focus groups. Should the first year's results exceed or fall short of expectations, the next year's percentages should be adjusted more or less rigorously as is deemed appropriate. In essence, the growth percentages will become a more dynamic entity within the objective and will be less static over the seven-year period.
- Moving forward, the Team also suggests that HHRS continue to utilize new data from different sources (e.g., PARCC) as part of the evaluation of the overall objective.

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	

Does the action plan:	YES	NO
Include enough activities to ensure that the objective will be achieved?	X	
Include all appropriate 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?	N/A	
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?

Although no areas were evaluated "No" ...

- The Team suggests that an academic bridge is established between the sixth (grammar school) and seventh (middle school) to increase the seventh grade scores and reduce the skill gap demonstrated in the current scores.
- The Team recognizes that involves all of its stakeholders and we suggest this continues as the school navigates through this objective.

B.3. Student Performance Objective #2:

By the year 2021, students enrolled in STEM-related courses will show academic growth through standardized testing in mathematics and science.

C.2.a. 95% of students will achieve proficiency or above on the NJASK-8 Science assessment.

C.2.b. 80% of students will achieve proficiency or above on the New Jersey Biology

Competency Test (NJBCT)

C.2.c. 80% of students enrolled in STEM-related courses will score “3” or higher on a math or science Advanced Placement examination after having been enrolled in and completed STEM-related courses.

	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?

- None.

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	
Include all appropriate major action steps?	X	
Address aspects of the Middle States Standards for Accreditation	X	

Does the action plan:	YES	NO
identified as weak in the institution's self-assessment of how well it meets the Standards?		
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?	N/A	
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?

Although no area was evaluated "No"

- The Team suggests revisiting the timeline in an effort to avoid the use of "ongoing"
- The school may wish to set a target date for an action step to be initiated and then set a time during each year when data is to be gathered, a time when the data is to be evaluated, a time when a decision is to be made if the action step needs to be continued or dropped, etc...

B.5. Organizational Capacity Objective:

Organizational Capacity Objective

By the year 2021, students at Henry Hudson Regional School will improve their post-secondary options and career awareness as measured by:

C.3.a 100% of our students will use the Naviance system for college and career planning.

Currently, the Naviance Account Usage page for the 2013-14 school year indicates that 84% of our students have used Naviance at least one time.

C.3.b. A 10% increase per school year in parental attendance at post-secondary related conferences/informational sessions.

According to sign-in sheets filed from the 2014-2015 school year, 63 parents/guardians signed in to our post-secondary conferences/informational sessions. The sessions that were sponsored by Henry Hudson Regional: Senior Post-Secondary Planning Night; PSAT Score Interpretation Conference; High School Planning Night for grades 9-11; and FAFSA Workshop.

C.3.d. To sponsor at least one Career Day per school year for all students in the school.

There has not been a Career Day at HHRS since the 2007-2008 school year.

C.3.e. A 5% increase per school year in the number of students who take part in “job shadowing” experiences in a variety of career fields by their senior year.

According to Genesis, Vocational School, and Guidance Office student data, 21 students took part in a career field experience in 2013-14.

	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?

- 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	
Include all appropriate 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?	N/A	
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?

Although no area was evaluated "No"

- The Team suggests revisiting the timeline in an effort to avoid the use of "ongoing"
- The school may wish to set a target date for an action step to be initiated and then set a time during each year when data is to be gathered, a time when the data is to be evaluated, a time when a decision is to be made if the action step needs to be continued or dropped, etc...

- Although none of these activities will cease this Team suggests that the HHRS Planning Team continue to look for new activities which could be added to the plan. A listing of Career Exploration Tools and Materials To Assist Educators, Counselors, And Students is found on the NJ DOE Office of Career and Technical Education website

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	
• One or more assessments for each objective	X	
• Baseline data for at least one assessment for each objective	X	
• Technical approval of the objectives	X	
Comprehensive action plans for each objective	X	
Plan for regular monitoring and review of the Plan (at least once annually)	X	

Observations

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

- The Team commends the school for the diligence given to the search for objectives which meet the needs of students and staff and are a good fit for its mission and beliefs.
- The Planning Team is commended for choosing objectives which are a fit with the new Strategic Plan so as to avoid having, “too many balls in the air” for a small school to juggle

at the same time.

- The school is commended for involving all stakeholders in determining the objectives.
- This Team finds the school to be committed to data-driven decision making.

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:

- The Planning Team should be prepared to provide new benchmarks as state requirements change and as new survey tools become available.
- The Planning Team may wish to examine the Action Plan timelines to make them more specific.

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
---	--

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

C. THE VISITING TEAM’S OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Observations

In this section, the Team lists any general observations regarding the degree to which the school meets this Standard and/or its Indicators of Quality.

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 mission statement and core beliefs are posted throughout the school.
- Several and teachers demonstrate an understanding of the mission statement and they appear to genuinely believe in it.
- The mission statement discusses the importance of instruction.
- The mission statement discusses the importance of students attaining necessary skills and being empowered to strive in a highly competitive society.
- Parent surveys indicated a high level of understanding of and support for the school's philosophy and mission.

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 at some future date the Mission Statement is revisited, HHRS might consider enhancing it to more accurately reflect the school's unique identity. For example the Team heard during from stakeholders:
 - a small school that feels like a big school
 - a safe haven for the students and the community
 - a public school that feels like a private school.
- The school may wish throughout the year to recognize students and staff who exemplify components of the Mission Statement.

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	

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
---	--

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	X
Policies related to governance and leadership	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:

- HHRS has a highly effective administrative team including, but not limited to, the superintendent, principal, and dean of students.
- HHRS operates under the direction of its own active and interested Board of Education.
- 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 as evidenced by the observations which follow:
- A staff member stated, "Our school is unique. Due to our school's small student population, everyone is treated like an individual. It is like a private academy".
- The principal told this Team that, "Strategic Planning has been a great way of including the stakeholders in the involvement of their children's education and development of the school's progression."
- The principal stated that she led the Strategic Planning initiative which involved staff, students, administrators and stakeholders within the community such as business owners.
- Planning meetings available for all contributing members including Saturday meetings.
- A staff member said that the school has very close community involvement opportunities for the students.
- A Staff member said that the working and communication relationship between teachers and administration was, "excellent."
- Several staff members as well as the principal agreed that parent involvement within the school was very high and there was a mutual respect between both groups.
- A guidance counselor said The Child Study Team has a great working relationship with the teachers and they use each other as supports.
- A Guidance Counselor stated, "When you share information with staff, they are more willing to support you with ideas you have".
- The Board Members, as well as teachers and parents, are kept abreast of all planning information through weekly updates and email.
- The Team notes the impending retirement of the current Dean of Students (who has an extensive job description) and wishes School and District Leadership good fortune in finding someone or ones to replace him.

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 principal, Lenore Kingsmore, involves parents and students in the hiring of new staff.
- Parents and students are encouraged to communicate their ideas, needs and concerns about the hiring process. She also stated, “With criticism comes improvement”.
- Staff members have risen to the challenge of the current principal to increase rigor in instruction with excellent results.

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 open lines of communication with students, families and stakeholders.
- Continually seek opportunities that provide time for re-evaluating the long term plans.
- The Governing Body and Planning Team monitor the work being done by those who may replace the current Dean of Students to determine that these activities are closely coordinated and continue to support the current high level of student achievement in enrichment and athletic endeavors.

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
---	--

B. EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT THE TEAM'S ASSESSMENT

Evidence	Visiting Team
Data from Observations and Interviews	X
Strategic and/or long-range plan	X
Financial plan	X
Enrollment plan	X
Policies related to school improvement planning	X
Facilities plan	X
Technology plan	X
Professional Development plan	X
Staffing plan	X
Curriculum Review/Revision plan	X

C. THE VISITING TEAM'S OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Observations

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

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:

- Planning is done collaboratively and all staff members appear to be aware of the long range improvement goals.
- Frequent, structured common planning time encourages and facilitates teacher dialogue on continuous improvement.

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 Team observed that the school makes efforts that go beyond their plan to provide an academic environment that develops self-esteem and character as well as team effort and collaboration between the student-body.

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:

- HHRS may wish to revisit their plans in the event of a tri-district referendum being approved resulting in the formation of a unified K-12 school district.
- Governance and Leadership may wish to consider finding a greater variety of vehicles of communication to reach all stakeholders.

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
---	--

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
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:

- Financial resources are sufficient to provide the educational opportunities defined in the school's philosophy/mission.
- June 30, 2014 The Auditor's Management Report indicates among many that:
 - The School Business Manager is properly bonded
 - The study of compliance for E.S.E.A. indicated no areas of non-compliance
 - salary withholdings were promptly remitted to the proper agencies
 - Regarding Special and State Projects there were no areas of non-compliance
 - The test of T.P.A.F. forms filed showed no exceptions noted
 - Food Service transactions and records were maintained in satisfactory condition.
 - The district's accounting records were maintained in accordance with the GAAP manual
 - No exceptions were noted in the Pupil Transportation or Student Activities accounts
- The district must continue to deal with the devastation caused by Super Storm Sandy
- Fifty-six graduates of the HHRS Class of 2014 earned a total \$1,451,909.00 in scholarships

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:

- HHRS is extremely diligent and very creative in applying for and using grants.
- An incredibly active PTO supports the school financially.
- Finances are regularly and publically reviewed at BOE meetings and posted on-line in the minutes.

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:

- Increased communication with students and their families on all areas of finance to foster a

better understanding of where the money is being used in order to increase stakeholder input. This may be especially necessary as new STEM and career awareness initiatives are implemented.

- Continuing to find ways to increase funding for extracurricular activities and sports.

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
---	--

B. EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT THE TEAM'S ASSESSMENT

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

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:

- Hallways are wide and spacious; student lockers are well maintained and do not have locks or combinations. Lighting is bright & appropriate-- Instructional & common areas.
- Hallways, lavatories, and other commons areas are clean and well maintained.
- Classroom furniture is in exceptional condition and instructional spaces are wide and comfortable. The band room has “cubby” storage for instruments, has soundproof individual practice rooms, and has exceptional sound dampening systems on side walls and ceilings. The band area is exceptional for a school of this size.
- Composite floor on cafeteria/gym/auditorium is state of the art surfaces that is well maintained given the level of usage and events in this multipurpose space
- Climate control for computer labs, media production studio, and some resource rooms is adequate to protect sensitive technology.
- Ingress/egress doors are clearly marked all exterior doors are “crash bar and keyed”.
- The library has become the center of the building complex due to the expansion that occurred. The second floor of the original building is used exclusively for MS.
- In the 2004 expansion producing science labs and special needs classroom space, it was noted that all labs are spacious in design with newer portable lab tables. One lab prep area was exceptional, while the second is due for renovations which involve developing a 4th lab space anticipated to house future STEM lab for high school.
- Decision to use large space across from gym for TV production studio rather than develop a weight/cardio workout room is a concern to many students and staff. Not all students are involved in TV production whereas all students 7-12 would derive benefit from wellness/PE use of an onsite workout space.
- Lighting on exterior grounds and parking lots and PTZ cameras provide secure spaces for parking since the facility is used extensively after hours for community functions.
- Two F/T custodians during the day and 3 for night crew are the reason for the high quality of cleanliness observed. The Head Custodian has 17 years of experience organizing tasks, dealing with Hurricane Sandy crisis, and takes exceptional pride in caring for his building. His leadership & attention to detail makes operations successful.
- Current custodial staff members all have black seal licenses and at least 5 years at the school.
- Inspections for HVAC, fire alarms, OSHA, etc. are all current and well documented.

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 band area is exceptional, for example, schools this size usually do not have individual practice rooms. Risers were not observed in the band orchestral area for full band classes.
- Custodial staff exhibit superior attention to detail and professionalism.

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 use of park system for STEM related classes.
- Continue upkeep of school including computer labs and science labs.

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
---	--

B. EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT THE TEAM'S ASSESSMENT

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

C. THE VISITING TEAM'S OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Observations

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

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 school has an easily understood code of conduct and that is communicated to the student's and their families.
 - The members of the school's staff are qualified and able to perform their duties.
 - The administration implements written policies and procedures for all areas of operation.
 - All stakeholders indicated that they feel students are safe in this school.
 - Professional development is encouraged and opportunities for the same are offered.
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 Therapy Dog, Hudson, located on the Middle School floor is an exceptional asset to the students he works with and is a valued member of the entire school community.
- The Sandy Hook Experiential Learning program is also exceptional and provides a fine service to students enrolled and to the community as well.

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:

- Encouraging the improvement of school spirit among students, families and the community.
- Continuing to search for new venues for providing distance learning in areas where the school's small size and small student body limit the availability of in school classroom instruction.
- Using the new college and career readiness initiatives to increasingly involve family and

community members in an effort to develop pride and school spirit as well as for their primary intent.

- Giving consideration to an on-line school store which will offer spirit wear and, of course, generate need funds for the school.

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
---	--

B. EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT THE TEAM'S ASSESSMENT

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

C. THE VISITING TEAM'S OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Observations

In this section, the Team lists any general observations regarding the degree to which the school meets this Standard and/or its Indicators of Quality.

The Visiting Team observed that:

- The school has satisfactory written procedures and functional equipment in place to deal with emergencies and summon help when needed. Hall duty teachers communicate with office via radio. Student backpacks are prohibited during the day.
- Coaches are able to provide adequate emergency care at functions off school premises.
- Concussion screenings and exams are performed along with physicals.

- All staff members are trained to respond in crisis situations and drills are performed twice a year for evacuation and active shooter/intruder in cooperation with local law enforcement and first responders.
- Current health records are kept for all students. Screenings are performed as mandated by State Regulations for audio, vision, & scoliosis. Dentals are by need.
- Records are kept of the dates and times of drills and monthly fire drills are documented.
- Nurse is aware of HIPAA privacy laws and disseminates information to the counselors who are charged with 504 service agreement preparation. Visiting nurse agency is contacted if nurse is absent or on school trip for substitute nurse.
- The school effectively controls access to the building & interior areas of the building after school hours for community events via keyed systems and updated video surveillance systems. An increase from 9 cameras to 37 cameras was performed; including exterior PTZ cameras for parking lots and building exterior.
- The Dean of Students is responsible for school security and student discipline. There are no school police on site.
- The building site is remote and on top of a mountain with access from two separate steep, narrow roadways merging into a common road with an apartment complex at one end of the parking lot.
- The school was used as a shelter during hurricane Sandy and has back-up generators for power. There is limited storage for disaster supplies.
- Cafeteria staff members are trained in the safe handling and preparation of food. Food is prepared on-site although it is a contracted service and meets federal mandates.
- The school has been creative in dealing with safe storage of materials, as storage spaces are at a premium.
- The three lab rooms built during the addition in 2004 have superior laminar flow prep stations, lab safety showers & eye wash stations, as well as material storage areas for caustics and acids. A fourth lab renovation is planned.
- Student interviews indicate that they feel safe in their building due to the small size and the fact everybody knows everybody else indicating they don't mind administrative rules on backpacks, cell phone usage, & social media usage during the school day.
- When the administration sought to require locks on student lockers students fought for and won the continuance of the tradition of "no lock" lockers as a sign of the trust they have in each other.

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:

- Assessing the current practice whereby camera surveillance is accessed by a variety of school personnel including secretaries. This may be a future potential issue as to access to this video.
- Increased communication with parents/guardians during emergencies to prevent obstacles to emergency responders.
- Revisiting health and safety policies when new STEM courses are implemented to determine that all regulations are complied with.

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
---	--

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:

- Child study team has a high degree of influence on educational program determination.
- AP Courses not offered during the school day are available in this small school because there are 5 computer labs in the building.
- Dual Enrollment courses are offered in house and through Brookdale Community College.
- ELL is serviced via distance learning and a certified ELL instructor who is paid for hours of instruction provided to students.
- The school has a strong, standardized curriculum aligned to Common Core Standards.
- The teachers are knowledgeable, competent, and generally energetic.
- Formative & Summative Assessment is ongoing and a vital part of the institutional culture. Program is aligned to NJ State testing requirements.
- The educational program not only provides instruction in the basic subject areas but also provides a wide-range of experiences such as World Languages via distance learning. Small class sizes permit personalized educational planning & experiences.
- The athletic program supports the academic program through encouraging good citizenship, teamwork, and school spirit.
- Homework club is contractual for staff.
- Employment of a Tri- District Curriculum Supervisor has resulted in the adoption of vertical and horizontal alignment of Common Core Standards for grades K-12 from the three sending elementary districts. The goal is to maintain enrollment in MS.
- Grades 7 & 8 Core Teachers have a common planning period and have been looping four years. Middle school student responses were very mixed for looping of instruction.
- Co-teaching for at risk students and team teaching were also implemented this year in all grades. Social programs are stressed in MS.
- SGO's were required from every staff member to increase math scores.
- Re-installment of SAT and ACT prep classes so that students do not have to pay for outside tutoring for college entrance exams.
- A small number of special needs students are placed into outside programs.
- Appropriate evidence for Program Standards & Objectives was readily observed.

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:

- There are a variety of group learning settings available to students.
- All students are challenged to face the expectations of the world they will face upon graduation.

Recommendations

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

The Visiting Team recommends:

- The soonest possible implementation of the various planned school-wide career awareness activities.
- Using the STEM initiative to provide a greater number of higher level learning experiences.
- Providing up-to-date written and online information for students and parents regarding both on-line and in-house new class offerings.
- An increased focus on educational programing for incoming students' parents (middle school and high school).

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 it 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
---	--

B. EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT THE TEAM'S ASSESSMENT

Evidence	Visiting Team
Data from Observations and Interviews	X
Example of student transcript	X
Example student report card	X
Reports of the results of assessments administered to students	X
Policies related to assessment of student learning	X
Description of Assessment Programs	X
20-Points of Writing Data Collection	X
Portfolio Sample	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:

- HHRS graduates informed the team that they were well prepared for the challenges of higher education or the workplace.
- The school has a long term strategic plan that supports realistic improvement for all students in both academic and State Assessments scores.
- The curriculum is aligned to Common Core Standards.
- The *Parent Portal* keeps parents up-to-date on their child's progress.
- Student learning and performance records are maintained.
- Standards for control and access to student documents, including those related to confidentiality are known and observed.
- "Across the Curriculum" initiatives have resulted in improved standardized test scores.
- AP courses are offered to students with the intention of challenging and increasing student knowledge.
- The school has implemented some co-teaching experiences that have proven successful in raising student achievement.
- There is a plan in effect to implement an SAT and ACT test preparation program.
- As a student stated, "The teachers challenge students to reach their highest potential"
- The Team saw that, due to the small class sizes, students could receive individualized help from their teachers.
- The school offers a before and after school academic assistance program for students desiring extra help.
- The National Honor Society Students offer a tutoring service.

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:

- An exceptionally high number of opportunities for academic assistance are available to all students by way of both flexible scheduling of programs and by teachers who are patient and supportive.

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:

- Striving to improve *Parent Portal* usage by staff and parents.

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
---	--

B. EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT THE TEAM'S ASSESSMENT

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

C. THE VISITING TEAM'S OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Observations

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

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:

- As a teacher stated, “The students that receive special services are truly integrated. They receive life skills, inclusion and regular classroom settings as needed.”
- A co-teaching model has been adopted into the special education classroom as well as the general education classroom that has proven to be successful with classified and mainstreamed students. The model is, as the principal told the Team, “student driven”.
- Students from area private schools are returning due to their being able to receive better and more personalized services at Henry Hudson
- CST members told this Team that they are given opportunities to attend professional development workshops to expand their knowledge and pick up new ideas.
- The CST has been involved in creating relationships with the community and other outside agencies that have been instrumental in providing opportunities and services for their students.
- Special education teachers and The Child Study Team meet often to collaborate and keep open lines of communication.
- Guidance counselors are able to meet with all students in a variety of settings.
- There are many nightly services for the parents and community on such topics as high school planning, college planning, FASFA completion, etc...

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:

- A CST staff member was sent to visit out of district schools to help re-evaluate their own program.
- As mentioned earlier in this report, the Therapy Dog and Sandy Hook Experiential Learning programs are of exceptional benefit to many special needs 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:

- HHRS may wish to consider serving the entire cafeteria menu from both points of entry since a number of students receiving free and reduced lunches feel unnecessarily

stigmatized by current practice.

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
---	--

B. EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT THE TEAM'S ASSESSMENT

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

C. THE VISITING TEAM'S OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Observations

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

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 are able to participate in multiple sports and activities due to size of school population.
- The school networks with other districts to allow students to participate on sports teams not offered by their home district school.
- Many sports are in an approved cooperative with other schools due to school size and fiscal sense. One student remarked “if you play FB with the other school, you get a varsity letter in that sport from that school. If they join our tennis team here, they get a Hudson letter. That’s pretty awesome so it motivates us to go out for sports.”
- Over 80 % of staff members are coaches or club sponsors and many teachers coach or sponsor several.
- Coaches affirm that they have a “built-in tightly knit network—we help each other outside and inside the classroom”. A critical component to this very smoothly running complex operation was observed to be the retiring veteran Dean of Students/Athletic Director/Transportation/Scheduler and his loss will be felt.
- Sports begin at 3 PM after the afternoon homework club.
- There is an active SAC program as some issues of substance abuse as well as other social issues manifest themselves, “even in the smallest HS in NJ” as one staff member stated.

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:

- A very high proportion of HHRS students are involved in the Band and/or Key Club and they are very active in projects and activities that serve the community.
- The band program is comparable to much larger schools in prestige.
- The school provides transportation to and from after school activities.

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:

- Considering implementing activities and service projects related to new STEM classes.
- Exploring new ways to inform parents/guardians of the many sports and activities offered

at HHRS

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
---	--

B. EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT THE TEAM'S ASSESSMENT

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

C. THE VISITING TEAM'S OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Observations

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

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 beautiful and functional Media Center was always in use by students.
- There are almost 11,000 books in the Media Center's print collection
- The school's web page is the portal to a wide variety of online textbooks
- Aside from the card catalog, the Media Center link on the school's web page is the link to dozens of electronic databases including the very valuable EBSCOhost.
- Over 100 networked desktop or laptop computers are available for student use.
- The school's internet connection has a Barracuda web filter to maintain a safe environment and age-appropriate resource for students when using technology.
- There are four computer labs and the lab in the Media Center
- Twenty-four classrooms are equipped with a Smart Board.
- Students and staff use technology in the classroom on a regular basis.
- The video production room is well equipped.
- The Information Skills Curriculum is of practical use and requires students to actively participate

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:

- Students have a 1:1 ratio with technology
- All students in grades seven through eleven were issued Chrome Books.
- Programs and technology are up-to-date.
- The Media Center is open before, during, and after school for those who do not have a computer, printer, or copier at home.
- Students have technical support for any issues that arise.

Recommendations

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

The Visiting Team recommends:

- The Team concurs with the school's recommendation that there is a need for improvement in school's internet speed and in stabilization of network capacity.

- More in-depth training in the use of new technology hardware and software would be a great benefit to staff and students as indicated by the results of the Self Study.
- Closely coordinating with the Planning Team as the new STEM objective is implemented.

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 Henry Hudson Regional 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 report given by the Chair at the conclusion of the team's visit.

Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. We are pleased to see so many staff and administrators present to hear the preliminary observations and thoughts of the Middle States Validation Team to your school. We will leave Henry Hudson Regional School at the end of this report, feeling that we have had a full and rich experience of your school. We appreciate the gracious reception we have received and the openness with which you have shared some of your deepest concerns and greatest desires.

This oral report is a brief summary of the major points that will likely be included in the written report, which will follow in approximately six to eight weeks.

I will not be able to entertain any questions or enter into any discussion. You will have the opportunity to ask questions about our findings after you have received and reviewed the written report.

I cannot proceed any further without telling you how much I appreciated help and correction I received from the other members of this team and for the service they rendered to you and to the Middle States Association: George Harwick, Craig Hoek, Gina Irizarry, and Matthew Pearce. They are an outstanding group of educators who, although we never met prior to this visit, have developed an instant bond. If you have never taken the opportunity to serve on a Validation team you may not be aware that team members are volunteers who have given of their own professional and personal time to provide this service to you. The team members have worked diligently day and night to be as thorough as possible in the short time we had to look at the documentation and to speak with you in order to come to a clear understanding of what this community is.

By choosing *AFG*, you have made several commitments.

- You committed to focusing on the end result—improved student performance-- as the primary priority for your efforts.
- You committed to operating from a vision of where you want and need to go with your mission and beliefs serving as the unifying force for change.
- You committed to including a varied spectrum of stakeholders in the process of defining your vision, in developing the means to get closer to that vision, and in implementing action plans developed by these stakeholders.
- You have committed to a process where your progress will be continuously reviewed.
- You have agreed to participate in a peer review and external validation process by accepting us into your midst.

Frank Lloyd Wright is quoted as saying, "I know the price of success: dedication, hard work, and an unremitting devotion to the things you want to see happen." The Team believes that this is the Henry Hudson way of doing things.

Your inclusive planning team embraced the process and was diligent in its efforts. A parent member called service on the Planning Team, "a learning experience" and said that "the interaction at team meetings allowed them to, "see [the school] through each other's eyes." Another said that she saw it was "only to our benefit to serve on a committee that benefits our children." An adult member said, "Everyone's opinions were important" and then told us how valuable it was to hear the student team member's opinions. This Validating Team is convinced that each of them participated because they saw their work would benefit the students of Henry Hudson Regional School.

The Validation Team believes that internal planning is institutionalized at Henry Hudson Regional School. For effective planning to take place, there needs to be a group of stakeholders who monitor and evaluate the success of the plans on a continuing basis, a group who oversees the plan and is the keeper of the flame. We urge your team of gatekeepers to stick with the process in the months and years to come and we strongly urge them to continue to involve all stakeholders in developing the short and long range goals for the school so that there is a sense of ownership by those who will be responsible for implementing the plans. We found that Internal Coordinator Dr. Andrea DePaolo received Middle States training but that Wendy Glester, who picked up the mantle later in the process, did not receive it. Yet both performed their duties flawlessly. It is the Team's opinion that training helps in developing a larger tool box useful in accomplishing the tasks ahead and so suggests that Wendy be given the opportunity to attend training if she would so desire.

To paraphrase General George S. Patton, "A good plan executed today is better than a perfect plan executed at some indefinite point in the future." You have made good plans. Put them to work.

A realization of the ongoing nature of the work of planning is needed to ensure effective change takes place. We urge you to consistently and diligently gather and analyze data on your progress. The showing of positive outcomes is often a key factor in maintaining momentum and support for the work. And negative outcomes should result in an examination of the process steps to look for any disconnects. You have developed a good set of objectives and action plans but don't be afraid to modify them when necessary.

Content of the Plan

A mission statement should describe in broad and visionary terms what the school is and is striving to become. It should be outcome-based, providing clarity on the school's audience

(whom it serves), its action (what it does), its aim (the purpose for which it exists) and its function (how, in broad terms, it will do it).

You immediately define your audience as being your students. The students at Henry Hudson Regional School were and are central to every decision made especially in the last several years. We can see how much you care for them. What you may not always notice is how much they care for you. Students told us many, many times how someone on the staff extended a kindness or a sympathetic ear when it was most needed. Students also told us how pleased their parents were to know that they were attending the same school where, in a generation previous, they themselves had found themselves to be loved and cared for. Once a student enters the door at HHRS he or she becomes another link in a strong chain that reaches both into the community's past and into its future. It is readily evident that each part of the school community cares for each other.

In the first part of your mission statement you chose as an action, "provides." The Middle States Association feels that, "An important key to creating a mission that is both inspirational and aspirational is choosing a strong and proactive verb to represent the school's "action" — what it does or should do for its audience. We suggest you might want to consider using an even stronger verb such as, "Henry Hudson Regional School ensures a personalized learning experience.

You chose as your aim, to foster academic achievement while equipping students with the myriad of skills necessary for them to be successful. Here we find former students telling us that in college and careers they have been able to out-perform their peers thanks to the excellent instruction they received here.

As a means you chose the maintaining of small class sizes utilizing a highly engaging curriculum. Small class sizes are of little value unless students are challenged to exceed the norm. At HHRS a well-developed curriculum and rigor in instruction are a combination that has taken this school to a higher point than anyone could have envisioned even five years ago. You also recognize that the means for accomplishing this task cannot always come from within the building so we are reminded of the value of families and the community who support your efforts. We note that later in the mission you chose to use embracing, as in, "embracing a strong partnership with its community." There are plenty of schools who claim they want community involvement yet shy away from having parents take an active role in making real decisions affecting their school. You really do cherish it! And we have found that parents, and other community members, given the opportunity, rise and have risen to the challenge. You take every opportunity to reach out to parents and welcome them into the building and they, in turn, support you in every step you take to help prepare their sons and daughters for a better future.

Validating teams are required to note to the Middle States office the *unique identity* of the school as identified in the mission. Discussions with the planning team lead us to believe that you have chosen as your identity small class size and low student-to-teacher ratio. These are, no doubt, both accurate yet to this team they seem an understatement. When, in the future, you re-examine your mission statement we would suggest you consider adding a bolder identifier. We have heard you called, "Public Education in a Private Atmosphere." This Team also sees you much like the State of Delaware as being a "Small Wonder" and that, of course, you know you are!

Belief statements perform a critical foundational role in 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.

Belief Statements are intended to serve as the foundation of a strong strategic plan, are matters of faith, and describe your overriding convictions. They are the distillation of the thoughts of many both in the school and the community. Your set of Beliefs is simple to understand and is an excellent fit with your Mission Statement. This Team notes that you live each belief every day. We note, however, the statement, "We believe the role of the staff is to inspire students to reach their fullest potential." We feel that this is too small in its scope and only partially represents what you are doing here. We hope you might someday consider revising this to state the obvious, at Henry Hudson we all, students, staff, and parents, inspire each other to reach our fullest potential.

Your Profile of Graduates is well written and is a fit with your mission and beliefs. Here you demonstrate where your caring and your use of the best instructional techniques have paid off. When interacting with proud, former graduates of this school this team notes that these are indeed the traits one might recognize a graduate of HHRS.

The *Accreditation for Growth* protocol requires schools to have 2-4 measurable student performance objectives. The Henry Hudson Team has developed three objectives that meet all Middle States criteria for AFG objectives.

We appreciate the hours all of you spent in determining what would be needed if your students are to grow academically and find a vocation suitable to their interests and abilities.

In the area of the action plans, the Validation Team found your plans to be adequate and note again that many activities are already underway. We encourage the school to be dogged in implementing the plans and making any modifications that may, if the data indicates, appear to be necessary. We have suggested that you may wish to make your actions more time-

bound and are pleased to note that such consideration is already taking place. Record the data religiously and examine it the same way.

This report is expected to include three to five areas where the team might suggest there is room for improvement. This was difficult since you do so many things well yet we offer to your consideration a revisiting of the Mission Statement, improved communication with the home and community (and, yes, we are pleased to know you have recently taken steps to address this), an examination of the Action Plans to look toward simply projecting when an action step is to be implemented and then separately indicating when/how often data from the implemented step should be collected, recorded, and analyzed by the Planning Team. Based on conversations this team had with many students we strongly encourage you to consider serving the entire cafeteria menu from both points of entry. We recognize that a number of students receiving free and reduced lunches feel unnecessarily stigmatized by current practice.

This report is also expected to mention three to five positives. This was an even more difficult task because there are so very many to choose from. We limited ourselves to admiring your vision that resulted in unique programs such as the Sandy Hook Experiential Learning Project and the therapy dog initiative in the middle school. We want to recognize your custodial and other maintenance staff for the remarkable care they give to keep this building looking new. We noticed a particularly close staff and one which is willing tutor, coach, run a club, or bravely learn in front of their students how to use some new piece of technology because it is good for kids. As a corollary we lift up your cooperative athletic agreements to offer your students even more than you are able to provide on your own. Lastly, we all remarked on the number of parents you have helping to make real decisions concerning the operation of this school and its programs.

It is the Validation Team's opinion that the school presently meets all twelve of the Commission on Secondary Schools' standards. The school currently has established the conditions under which its objectives can be achieved. We found a well-maintained facility, an exemplary staff, a Board that provides sufficient, if not plentiful, resources to support the school program, and a broad array of educational programs and student activities

We note your dedication to improving instruction as the way to prepare your graduates for the, perhaps, cruel world they will enter. We also note that you are tirelessly working to produce self-disciplined students who take service to the school and the community very seriously. Please know that this service has not gone unrecognized. The Mayor of Highlands informed the team that, "The last three years have been challenging times for the borough. Our school and its board, principle, and faculty have been there for me personally and our entire town". It is probably just the Henry Hudson way of doing things but you are commended for your tireless efforts to create a better future for the students in your care and the communities you serve.

I am not able to continue without recognizing the tireless efforts of your Principal, Lenore Kingsmore. Her name came up in every conversation we had with students, staff, and community members as a champion for every imaginable kind of improvement this school has made in the relatively short time she has been here. She, Superintendent Susan Compton, and Curriculum Supervisor Daniel Loughran are commended by us for their hard work and dedication.

Many high schools seem to have two days. Day One is usually an academic day and Day Two includes all of the clubs and sports that brighten the day for students and staff, provide ownership of and identity with the school, and encourage students to keep up their attendance and their grades. The team found Henry Hudson Regional School to have an academic day where genuine instruction is offered to a polite, very eager, and always engaged student body. The team commends your awareness of the importance of Day Two and your efforts to make it possible for so many students to become active participants in these activities that foster cooperation and team building.

As a Validation Team we are asked to make an accreditation recommendation to the Commission on Secondary Schools at the conclusion of our visit. Our team has unanimously concluded that:

- The school has clearly defined appropriate objectives.
- The school has established conditions under which they can be achieved.
- The school is working toward achieving the objectives now.
- The school should be able to continue to do so for the foreseeable future.

We will be pleased to recommend continued accreditation for Henry Hudson Regional School.

Your Validation Team is uniquely yours. We came together for one time and we will never work together as a team again. I have been delighted to work with bright and enthusiastic people who brought insight, laughter, and dedication to this very important task. I also want you to know that Internal Coordinators Dr. Andrea DePaolo and Wendy Glester have earned my undying gratitude and, I trust, yours as well for all their efforts to make this event happen. I again commend your principal, for the wise choices she made throughout this process and for empowering all of you to make real decisions regarding your school's success.

As Peter Drucker put it, "Plans are only good intentions unless they immediately degenerate into hard work." Please stop and savor the moment. But don't stop too long since there are students waiting for you right now - waiting for the generous help and support you always seem ready to provide.

And so as we close and prepare to head back our respective jobs, we would like to leave you with the following thought from Vince Lombardi:

Leaders aren't born they are made. And they are made just like anything else, through hard work. And that's the price we'll have to pay to achieve that goal, or any goal.

I thank the entire Henry Hudson community for paying price to provide us with graduates who will be prepared to be New Jersey's leaders.

Thank you for this opportunity to serve you. The team wishes you Godspeed.

VISITING TEAM ROSTER

Role	Name	School/Organization
Chair of the Team	Charles G. Brozina	Millville Public Schools Millville, New Jersey
Team Member	George Harwick	Truman High School Levittown, Pennsylvania
Team Member	Craig Hoek	Piscataway High School Piscataway, New Jersey
Team Member	Gina Irizarry	Kenmare High School Jersey City, New Jersey
Team Member	Matthew Pearce	Princeton International School of Mathematics and Science Princeton, New Jersey