

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



# ACHIEVING EXCELLENCE SYSTEM WIDE

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

**Nanuet  
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# INTRODUCTION

The Middle States Association of Colleges and School systems is a non-governmental, nonprofit, peer-administered organization of diverse educational institutions committed to ensuring that students in accredited school systems are receiving the highest quality education. Additionally, the Association seeks to ensure that accredited school systems 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 system, meeting the requirements for accreditation, exemplary programs, and supportive services. Since 1887, the Association has provided leadership in educational quality and school system improvement for its member schools, school systems, and other education institutions in the mid-Atlantic region, throughout the United States and in more than ninety countries around the world.

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

The purpose of *Achieving Excellence System-Wide* is to provide a framework and process to guide the school system's efforts to achieve excellence in student performance and to achieve accreditation by the Middle States Association of Colleges and School.

*Achieving Excellence System-Wide* also provides the framework for formally aligning all the work of the school system to ensure that all of its efforts are coordinated and focused on achieving the school system's mission. It is expected that this framework will result in the development of:

- A sense of community and common purpose among the school system's students and staff, and its community of stakeholders.
- A Plan for Growth and Improvement in student performance and the school system's organizational capacity to produce the levels of student performance expected by the school system and its community of stakeholders.
- And greater cooperation between all of the school system's stakeholders in identifying and implementing practices that have been demonstrated to lead to excellence in student performance and the organization's capacity to produce the desired and expected levels of student performance.

Most importantly, this framework intends to develop in the school system's community of stakeholders an understanding that the school system it is part of a larger community of learners and that this community has agreed upon, supports, and accepts responsibility for assisting the school system in

achieving its Mission, Beliefs, Profile of Graduates, and Plan for Growth and Improvement in student performance and organizational capacity. This learning community understands that, by working together to articulate and align its efforts, it can achieve higher levels of excellence in student performance.

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

## What Is Excellence?

In his book *Good to Great*<sup>1</sup>, author Jim Collins posits that the transformation from being good to being great is a process of buildup followed by breakthrough. This process consists of three broad stages:

- Getting disciplined people into the organization;
- Getting the disciplined people to use disciplined thought; and
- Getting the disciplined people to take disciplined actions.

Collins goes on to say:

“...[I] believe that it is no harder to build something great than to build something good. It might be statistically more *rare* to reach greatness, but it does not require more suffering than perpetuating mediocrity.”<sup>2</sup>

Collins states that seeking greatness requires passion—“doing something you care that much about, and you believe in its purpose deeply enough, [that] it is impossible to imagine *not* trying to make it great.”<sup>3</sup>

In summary, the purpose of the *Achieving Excellence System-Wide* protocol is to assist and *provide* guidance to those educators who believe passionately in the need to create a better future for their students and seek a framework and a process to make that happen.

In order to change a culture, education leaders must keep the attention of the entire school system community focused on answering the five questions below. In the *Achieving Excellence System-Wide* protocol, the Planning Team was guided to develop answers to the following questions:

- #1: By the time they have experienced our full educational program and services, what should our students know, and how should they be able to use what they know? What content, skills, and work habits should be the priorities for learning? What attitudes, qualities or characteristics should our students demonstrate?

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<sup>1</sup> Jim Collins. *Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap...And Others Don't.* (2001). New York: HarperBusiness.

<sup>2</sup> Collins, p. 205

<sup>3</sup> Collins, p. 208

- #2: How well should students perform the desired outcomes, and what does excellent performance look like?
- #3: How will we measure and evaluate our students' performance in multiple ways?
- #4: How well do our students currently perform? What is the actual quality of their work?
- #5: What must we do to improve student performance?

In setting a course for continuous improvement in student and organizational performance, school systems and their communities must study not only what the existing data tell them about their students' present performance, but they must also set clear targets for what they want student performance to be in the future. Maintaining a focus on these five questions is essential to a successful continuous improvement process and is a "habit of mind" that must be cultivated and nurtured by the school system's leaders and those leading the growth and improvement efforts. Too often school systems find themselves working on curriculum and instructional materials and engaging in professional development before they have clearly decided what their students should know, how they should use their content knowledge, process skills, and work habits, and what the quality of their performance should be.

## Requirements for Accreditation

The requirements for accreditation using the *Achieving Excellence System-Wide* protocol are;

Number	Requirement
1	The system has conducted a thorough and complete self-study that has involved appropriate stakeholders of the school system.
2	The system has, and is using, foundational documents that govern the manner in which the school system does its work, including a Mission, Core Values, and a Profile of Graduates.
3	<p>A Profile of the School System and Its Community, which consists of the following elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Profile of the School System that describes the system's current organization and staff.</li> <li>• A Profile of Student Performance that describes the levels of performance currently being achieved by the system's students using data from multiple assessments; and</li> <li>• The Results of an External Scan that describe the external educational, social, political, economic, and technological factors that are and will be affecting the system's ability to achieve its Mission and its student performance and organizational capacity goals.</li> </ul>
4	A Profile of Organizational Capacity that describes the school system's capacity to produce the levels of its student performance and organizational capacity desired by its community of stakeholders and as expressed in the its Mission and Profile of Graduates.

<b>5</b>	Identified priorities for growth and improvement in student performance and the system's capacity to achieve the levels of student performance desired and expected.
<b>6</b>	A plan to grow and improve the priorities identified for growth and improvement that includes measurable objectives, multiple assessments to determine achievement of the objectives, and multi-year action plans to achieve the goals.

## **The Middle States Visiting Team**

The Middle States Visiting Team is a group of professional educators appointed by the Middle States Association's Commissions on Elementary and Secondary Schools to conduct an onsite visit to the school system. The purpose of the Team's visit is threefold. First, the Team determines whether the school system meets the twelve Standards for Accreditation. Second, the Team determines if the school system meets the requirements for a planning ethic and planning processes of the *Achieving Excellence System-Wide* protocol. Third, the Team reviews the content of the school system'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 system's community of stakeholders.

## **NOTE TO THE READERS OF THIS REPORT**

Readers of this report must be aware that, in its report, the Team is responding to the information, data, and self-assessments in school system's self-study. Therefore, the report is only meaningful when it is read in conjunction with the school system's Self-Study Document.

## ORGANIZATION FOR GROWTH AND IMPROVEMENT

A sound planning ethic and planning process are every bit as critical to achieving a school system's goals for growth in student performance and the school system's organizational 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 system have the capacity, the will, and the systematic structures required to implement its plan and achieve its goals?" An improvement plan full of great activities is only as strong as the ability and willingness of the school system 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 *Achieving Excellence System-Wide* protocol, it must commit to working toward establishing and maintaining a planning ethic within the school system. A planning ethic means that planning for growth and improvement becomes part of what the school system and its stakeholders do as much as providing programs, teaching, resources, services, and activities. A planning ethic requires continuous clarification of the school system'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 system is action-oriented by developing long-term strategic action plans that integrate programs, services, facilities, and support to address the school system's growth needs.

In the *Achieving Excellence System-Wide* protocol, the school system also makes a commitment to continuous growth and improvement. The school system 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 system 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 system 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 system 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 system strives to develop broad ownership of the planning process and the plan for growth and improvement by the entire community by ensuring broad based knowledge and understanding of and support for the goals and the plans to achieve them.

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

## Leadership for Growth and Improvement

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

- The planning process is important for the future of the school system and its component schools and its students; and
- They will provide the leadership, resources, and support needed to make the process and the plan successful.

This critical role for leaders also applies to the heads and governing bodies of the component schools that comprise the system. It is very difficult for an individual school within a larger system to plan strategically for improving student performance without the clear support and assistance of the system. They, too, must “champion the cause.”

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

## Internal Coordinators

A required component of the protocol is the appointment of a team of Internal Coordinators. The primary functions of the Internal Coordinators are to:

- Coordinate the school system's planning process and development of the Plan for Growth and Improvement;
- Oversee planning and preparation for the Visiting Team’s visit;
- Prepare for the Mid-Point Review visit; and
- Provide the energy, enthusiasm, and expertise to move the process forward.

## Observations

- The coordinators were selected to represent the three main internal levels of the district: District Administration, Building Administration, and Teachers



- The internal coordinators oversaw and organized every aspect of the self-study
- The district provided any such items the coordinators requested to carry out the process.
- The coordinators were selected to represent the three main internal levels of the district: District Administration, Building Administration, Teachers

## Recommendations

None

## The Planning Team<sup>4</sup>

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

- Develop a vision for the school system by creating or reaffirming a statement of mission;
- Develop a set of beliefs to serve as the ethical code for the institution;
- Develop a profile of the knowledge, skills, and qualities the institution expects of its graduates;
- Identify the areas of student performance that are the priorities for growth and improvement;
- Identify the areas of organizational capacity that are the priorities for growth and improvement;
- Oversee development of the action plans to achieve the performance objectives;
- Monitor implementation of the action plans; and
- Conduct a periodic review of the progress being made to achieving the objectives.

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

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

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<sup>4</sup> It is important to note that, although the *Achieving Excellence System-Wide* protocol calls this stakeholder group a Planning Team, what the school system calls this group is not important. Its purpose, composition, operation, and results are what is key. What the protocol requires for accreditation is that this group meets the letter and spirit of the requirements for a Planning Team without regard to what it is called. In many school systems, an improvement team already exists and includes the required stakeholders, so it makes sense for the school system to continue that organization with any adjustments necessary to meet the requirements of the protocol. This same principle applies to all requirements of the protocol. It is less important what elements and products of the process are called than it is that the school system meets the intentions and results of the requirements.

## Observations

- The members on the team included administrators, teachers, students, parents and members. This is reflective of our community of stakeholders.
- An overview meeting was held at the district to introduce the accreditation process to all stakeholders. Volunteers applied and were selected.
- The planning team met monthly, working on crafting the district’s action plan, objectives and goals. All decisions were made as needed based on the majority at each meeting.

## Recommendations

- Planning team meetings should include all stakeholders. Separate meetings were held with teachers, parents and students
- Following our accreditation visit, the team should reconvene, surveying who would like to remain. The team should again go through the training process to ensure all members are prepared to move forward

## Role of the School System’s Leadership and Governance

It is the school system's formal leaders—those in positions of authority and influence within the school system—who should serve as the primary “champions” for the planning process for the Plan for Growth and Improvement. Strategic planning experts have long held that champions are extremely important to the success of planning strategically. Because a goal of the self-study and accreditation process is to develop a vision and a strategy to achieve the plan that is accepted and supported by the school system's community of stakeholders, the school system's leaders and governing body must communicate clearly and often that this process and the resulting plan are important for the future of the school system and its students, and that they will provide the leadership, resources, and support needed to make the process and the plan successful.

## Observations

- The District Administrators fully supported the self-study, did not interfere with the process and delegated full operational authority to the Internal Coordinators.
- The Board supported the process and kept informed about the process.
- The school district provided excellent institutional, financial, and personal support for the successful completion of the Middle States study and visit.

## Recommendations

None

## The Plan for Institutionalizing a Planning Ethic

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

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

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

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

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

A planning ethic that provides significant roles for the stakeholders of the school system also has the effect of sharing among the stakeholders responsibility for the success of any planning for growth and improvement. *Achieving Excellence System-Wide* builds such roles and responsibilities into the self-study

and planning processes. Therefore, if implemented faithfully, *Achieving Excellence System-Wide* can provide the school system with the vehicle it needs to build sustainability into its planning for growth and improvement, because ownership of and responsibility for the success of the planning process and the plan for growth and improvement no longer rest with the head of the school system and the system's staff but with all of the school system's stakeholders.

### **Observations**

- Based on what was learned by this self-study and visit, the school should document what would be needed to assure greater future stakeholder participation
- The district will continue to ensure that the community of stakeholders are a part of the study process via Board of Education meeting presentations and postings on the district website

### **Recommendations**

None

## **The Plan for Communication and Awareness**

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

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

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

### **Observations**

- Meetings with the school staff and other members of the school community have kept stakeholders informed

### **Recommendations**

- The school should disseminate and publish the Self-Study and eventually the Final Report so that all stakeholders can share in this information

## The Plan for Periodic Reviews of the Plan for Growth and Improvement

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

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

Therefore, the *Achieving Excellence System-Wide* protocol includes the requirement that formal reviews of the Plan for Growth and Improvement, including its action plans and progress toward achieving the performance objectives are conducted periodically but, as a minimum, at least once annually.

### Observations

- The Visiting Team observed that Nanuet is committed to continuous improvement through planning.
- Strategies are already in place to insure the planning cycle is systemic to the organization.
- Planning takes into account all of the stakeholders. Opinions and input are sought.
- Intentions in the form of plans and initiatives are shared and discussed regularly with all stakeholders and appropriate written communication is the norm.
- The Leadership Team has been charged with insuring that the Action Plans are being developed and assessed

## THE VISITING TEAM’S RECOMMENDATIONS—ORGANIZATION FOR GROWTH AND IMPROVEMENT

### Recommendations

**In this section, the Team lists any recommendations to the school system regarding how it can improve its Organization for Growth and Improvement. Recommendations are suggestions and ideas of the Visiting Team, but the school system is not required to accept or act on them.**

None

## Recommended Monitoring Issues

In this section, the Team lists any aspects of the Requirements for the school system's Organization for Growth and Improvement 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 system's accreditation.

Requirement of the Protocol	Recommended Action
None	

# THE SCHOOL SYSTEM’S MISSION, BELIEFS, AND PROFILE OF GRADUATES

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

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

## A. MISSION

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

A mission statement should describe in broad and visionary terms what the school system is striving to become for the benefit of its students. A mission should be outcome-based, providing clarity regarding the school system’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).

It is not appropriate for a Visiting Team to determine whether the school system’s Mission is the right or wrong mission for the system 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 system and its community of stakeholders support and are “walking the talk” of the Mission. However, it is up to the school system to decide if the Team’s comments are legitimate and relevant. It is in this spirit that the following observations on the school system’s mission.

### The school system's Mission is:

- The Nanuet School District is committed to the personal development of each student so that upon graduation, he or she is prepared and inspired to apply learning in a changing, complex and interdependent world.

### Do the component schools have individual Missions?

	YES
x	NO

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

- It is evident that stakeholders have put energy into developing and understanding the Mission as it pertains to all aspects of the district in order to have it become a more natural part of their daily thinking and approach to all activities and decision making.
- A small group of stakeholders had opportunity for input into discussion about the Mission.
- It is evident through interviews that stakeholders are not just "talking the talk" but rather "walk the talk" as they lead their colleagues in the direction the Mission is taking them.
- Members of the Planning Team will have a continued role in the support of this Mission Statement and the implementation of the Action Plan.

## B. CORE VALUES

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

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

Only members of the school system's community of stakeholders can identify their deeply held values. A Visiting Team can, however, offer an objective perspective on what is unclear or seems inconsistent or incomplete in the school system's Core Values. Ultimately, however, it is the school system 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 system's Values made.

### The school system's Core Values are:

#### *We believe that:*

- Students should persevere in the face of challenges to develop their capacity to solve problems, to grow from failure, and to develop their sense of self-efficacy. **Perseverance.**
- Students should harness creativity in the development of work to facilitate their ability to think "outside the box" and contribute to the community. **Creativity.**
- Students should take charge of their own learning to identify appropriate resources and actions so that they can successfully complete a task. **Self-reliance.**
- Students should find personal meaning in the work that they do which inspires their willingness to take risks, agonize over details, and share their ideas and accomplishments with others. **Personal Meaning.**



- Students should devote the time and effort necessary to master core content so it functions as a basis for authentic and innovative applications. **Deep Knowledge.**
- Students should be receptive to the contributions of others to develop their own thinking, point of view, or strategy as well as enhance the power of collaborative tasks. **Perspective.**
- Students should have a clear picture of what quality looks like to focus the development and revision process. **Success.**

Students should operate within a shared code of ethics so that the way they conduct themselves, the work they produce and the contributions they make are honest, transparent, and trustworthy. **Personal Responsibility.**

Criterion	Meets the Criterion	Does Not Meet the Criterion
Precise in application	x	
Simply formatted and easily understood	x	
What the stakeholders believe, not what they think	x	
Begin with "We believe that..." not "We believe in..."	x	
Not bland platitudes without real value judgment	x	
Not prescriptions	x	
Not education specific but declarations of universal human values as held by the systems' community of stakeholders-values they would hold no matter where they were, under what conditions they found themselves, or business they were conducting	x	
Not trivial	x	
Do not include clichés or jargon	x	
Do not include "must" or "should," as those verbs make the statement an imperative, not a belief	x	

#### Do the component schools have individual Core Beliefs?

	<b>YES</b>
x	<b>NO</b>

#### To what extent do the school system's stakeholders know, understand, and support the school system's Core Beliefs?

- The District's Beliefs and Core Values were developed and revised by the District Planning Team during the self- study process. They are practical in application, simply formatted and easily understood, and are not presumptuous.
- Nanuet School District provides a practical set of beliefs/core values that may be easily understood by all stakeholders and fully complies with the Excellence by Design protocol.

Nanuet School District provides a practical set of beliefs/core values that may be easily understood by all stakeholders and fully complies with the Excellence by Design protocol.

## C. PROFILE OF GRADUATES

The Profile of Graduates provides the answer to the following question:

When our students have completed our entire educational program and have had the benefit of the services and activities provided by the institution and its community:

- What do we expect them to know?
- What do we expect them to be able to do with what they know?
- What qualities or characteristics do we want them to demonstrate?

A Profile of Graduates:

- Describes the students at the point of exit from the institution.
- States the values, achievements, 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 system's Profile of Graduates is:**

- Students should be able to examine a task/problem to figure out the best approach and pursue it, which requires ability to filter, analyze and synthesize information from a range of sources; seek out problem clarification; identification of possible solutions; and communication of thinking/findings. **Critical Thinking and Problem Solving.**
- Students should be able to take information and make something new out of it through the creation of new connections and development of new solutions to problems through novel application of products and processes. This requires students to deal with ambiguity, demonstrate strategic agility, and persist in the face of failure. **Innovative, Imaginative and Agile Thinking.**
- Students should be able to effectively work with others to complete a shared task which requires an openness to various approaches/points of view before establishing a shared direction,

development of a shared action plan that delineates roles, responsibilities, and timelines, and execution of individual parts to support the coherence/quality of the overall work. **Collaboration.**

- Students should be able to deliberately select the words, symbols, numbers, imagery, displays, and body language to connect with a target audience in a specific context to ensure that the content of the speech accurately and appropriately conveys their information, ideas, and intentions. **Effective Communication.**
- Students should be able to actively participate in the democratic process through designing and completing volunteer/service projects; running for student government and governance positions at the school, local and state levels; promoting point of view on key community issues through crafting and publishing opinion pieces in local and virtual media outlets as well as organizing/participating in community reform efforts; and engaging in public discourse with civility, conviction, and openness. **Civic Engagement.**
- Students should have basic knowledge of economic principles and terminology so that they can effectively analyze public policy and expenditures to make informed voting decisions; to make appropriate choices in the short-term to ensure solvency of personal finances and credit; to determine how to leverage financial resources and institutions to pursue entrepreneurial ideas; and to plan for long-term career goals and personal dreams. **Financial Literacy.**

Criterion	Meets the Criterion	Does Not Meet the Criterion
States what the school system expects its students to know upon completion of the educational program?	x	
States what the school system expects its students to do with what they know upon completion of the educational program.	x	
States what qualities or characteristics students are desired to demonstrate upon completion of the educational program?	x	
Describes the students at the point of exit from the school system.	x	
Defines the outcomes each and every student will attain if the mission is operative and appropriately translated into programs and services.	x	

**Do the component schools have individual Profiles of Graduates?**

	<b>YES</b>
x	<b>NO</b>

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

- It was obvious to the Visiting Team that the stakeholders know, support and understand the school’s Profile of the Parents were knowledge about the District’s goals for student outcomes and Profile of Graduates.
- “This District has prepared my children to not only be academically competitive, but more important, to have empathy and compassion for the people around them.” Parent
- “This place is my home. This is my family. They have helped me understand that the world is a bigger place and it is important to study, work hard, and give back to your community.”

## THE VISITING TEAM’S RECOMMENDATIONS—MISSION, BELIEFS, AND PROFILE OF GRADUATES

### Recommendations

**In this section, the Team lists any recommendations to the school system 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 system is not required to accept or act on them.**

- Consider using the Profile of the Graduates as recruitment material.
- Develop a procedure to explain the Profile of the Graduate to incoming students.
- Examine the Profile of the Graduates by conducting a gap analysis with curriculum to check for effectiveness.

### 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 system’s accreditation.**

Requirement of the Protocol	Action Recommended
None	

### 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 system does not meet. Such requirements must be added as a stipulation to the school system’s accreditation.**

Requirement of the Protocol	Action Recommended
None	

# THE DESCRIPTIVE SUMMARY OF THE SCHOOL SYSTEM AND ITS COMMUNITY

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

The Descriptive Summary of the School System and its Community includes the following information and data that describe the school system and the context in which the school system exists. This information and these data help the Visiting Team to understand the school system's Mission and the opportunities for and challenges to the school system as it seeks to achieve its Mission. The Descriptive Summary includes:

- A detailed summary of the school system's community.
- A history of the school system.
- The system's climate and organization and staffing.
- A list of component schools comprising the system.
- Enrollments and student demographics.
- Staffing and staff demographics.

The data and information contained in the Descriptive Summary are not evaluated by the Visiting Team. Instead, the information serves the following purposes:

- To ensure that the members of the Planning Team have a common knowledge base about the history and current status of the school system in those areas on which the accreditation of the school system will focus; and
- To "introduce" members of the Visiting Team to the school system, and as such, provide one of the lenses through which Team members will view and evaluate the school system.

Thus, the Descriptive Summary should provide sufficient information about the school system and its students' performance to build and enhance Team members' awareness and understanding of the total milieu in which the school system exists and operates.

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

## THE VISITING TEAM'S OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS – Descriptive Summary of the School System

### Observations

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

- The District’s several schools serve as points of unity for the small and cohesive community of Nanuet.
- The schools enjoy strong student, parental, and community support. In fact, with no prompting, interviewees frequently referred to their membership in, or relationship with, the school community as “family.”
- District data reveal a high degree of stability in the District including, but not limited to, the tenure of members of the school board, the superintendent and his central leadership team, building administrators, as well as curricular and instructional leaders. Moreover, the data show little turnover in instructional staff with only 11% changeover in the last three years and 0% of new hires for administrative staff.
- District data also reveal a high degree of experience (based on academic year 2018 data)—especially amongst instructional staff—with 28 teachers having 5 or fewer years of experience compared with 170 having 6 to over 20 years of experience.
- District data reveal a high rate of student retention as evidenced by academic year 2019 in which 92.3% of students were enrolled for the entire academic year
- The District recognizes the ongoing demographic shift that reflects significant growth in minority enrollment.
- The stability and the experience of central office and building leaders, instructional and curricular leaders, as well as classroom teachers and school support staff, has enabled the District to develop and to enact protocols and methods designed to monitor the progress of every student both in the moment and over time—and to communicate that progress to both students and families. Moreover, several interviewees expressed the opinion that student achievement in Nanuet was measured in “more than just numbers,” alluding to the importance placed on students’ social and emotional development.

## Recommendations

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

- The District is encouraged to continue its efforts relative to achieving diversity of its professional staff by recruiting minority candidates for instructional and potential administrative positions. This recommendation is based on data for academic year 2019 that reveal a professional staff composed of 96% Caucasian/White; 3% Hispanic; .8% Asian/Pacific Islander; and .3% African-American.

## DESCRIPTIVE SUMMARY OF SYSTEM STUDENT PERFORMANCE

The Descriptive Summary of System Student Performance includes the following information and data that describe the levels at which the school system's students are performing on assessments that are most valued and respected by the members of the system's community of stakeholders and staff and/or required by the state or organization of which the system is a part. The Summary includes data reported for the system and its component schools for:

- Academic assessments required by a state or other organization of which the system is a part, if applicable;
- Standardized academic assessments;
- School system-based academic assessments;
- Enrollments and results for Honors programs, Advance Placement courses and International Baccalaureate offerings (if any);
- Results from National Occupational Competency testing if applicable
- Achievement indicators such as graduation rate, college rigorous courses, college acceptance, etc.; and
- Measures of student citizenship such as attendance, promptness, discipline, etc.

Collecting and tracking data that describe how well the school system's students are performing in the areas that are normally used by the school system's community of stakeholders to determine whether the system is accomplishing its Mission and Objectives is important because the system needs these data to:

- Determine if it is making progress toward achieving its mission;
- Determine if its graduates are meeting the expectations expressed in the school system's Profile of Graduates; and
- Help in determining in which areas of student performance there are the largest gaps between what is expected and how students are performing and, therefore, what the focus of the school system's Plan for Growth and Improvement should be.

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

### Observations

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

### ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE ON STATE ASSESSMENTS—The School System

2018 62% proficient overall

Level 1 15%

Level 2 24%  
Level 3 31%  
Level 4 31%

**RETENTION IN GRADE—The School System**

Academic year 2019 92.3% of students were enrolled for the entire academic year

**GRADUATION RATE—The School System**

2018 graduation rate 97%

**CITIZENSHIP PERFORMANCE—The School System**

N/A

**Recommendations**

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

**Recommendations for the School System**

None



## THE DESCRIPTIVE SUMMARY OF ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

The Descriptive Summary of Organizational Capacity provides information and data that portray the school system's capacity to produce the levels of student performance the school system and its community of stakeholders desire and expect. The Summary consists of the results of a self-assessment conducted to determine the degree to which the school system meets the Middle States Standards for Accreditation for School Systems.

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

The Summary also provides those responsible for developing the school system's Plan for Growth and Improvement with a good understanding of the current status of the school system in terms of its capacity to produce the levels of student learning it states it desires in its Mission and Profile of Graduates.

### Standards for Accreditation for School Systems

*Foundational Standards:* Standards addressing best practices in the components of a school system that provide the *foundations* for quality in the educational program, services, and results in terms of student learning.

- Philosophy/Mission
- Governance and Leadership
- Planning for Growth and Improvement
- Finances
- Facilities
- System Climate and Organization

*Operational Standards:* Standards addressing best practices in delivering the educational program, services, and activities to the students.

- Health and Safety
- Educational Program
- Assessment and Evidence of Student Learning
- Student Services
- Student Life and Student Activities
- Information Resources and Technology

## MISSION STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION

**The Standard:** The school system 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 system’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 SYSTEM'S ADHERENCE TO THIS STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION

x	It is the Visiting Team's assessment is that the school system <b>MEETS</b> this Standard for Accreditation.
	It is the Visiting Team's assessment is that the school system <b>DOES NOT MEET</b> this Standard for Accreditation. The evidence that supports this assessment is shown in the Recommended Stipulations in Section C, below.

### B. EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT THE TEAM'S ASSESSMENT

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

### C. THE VISITING TEAM’S OBSERVATIONS, FINDINGS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Observations

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

#### Observations for the School System

- It is evident that after much thought and careful consideration, along with outside consulting, that the Nanuet School District has developed a Mission Statement that clearly states their vision for their student’s growth and development.

- Efforts are made to change the Mission Statement into kid-friendly language for the K-4 students.
- Efforts are being made in use social media hashtags to show Mission Statement being lived out
- Missions Statements are hanging in each building.
- Murals designed by students portraying aspects of the Mission, Word of the Month and Quote of the Month are posted throughout buildings and read as a part of the morning announcements at the High School.
- K-12 Curriculum mapped regularly to include components of the Mission Statement being implemented, 4Cs, along with Common Core standards being met.
- Teacher evaluations include the expectation that a component of the Mission Statement or the 4Cs is evident on the board.
- Continued professional development for teachers to help with the shift and to sustain changes that have been made since updated Mission statement was created.
- The District brought in a scheduling consultant to consider best use of time for students in all buildings.
- There is a regular use of surveys to various focus groups, parents and students to check status of the District's climate.

## Recommendations

**In this section, the Team lists any recommendations to the school system 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 system is not required to accept or act on them.**

### Recommendations for the School System

None

## Recommended Monitoring Issues

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

No.	Requirement of the Standard or Indicator	Recommended Action
	NONE	

## GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION

**The Standard:** The school system 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 system 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 system 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 SYSTEM'S ADHERENCE TO THIS STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION

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

### B. EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT THE TEAM'S ASSESSMENT

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

### C. THE VISITING TEAM'S OBSERVATIONS, FINDINGS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Observations

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

### **Observations for the School System**

- The district's leadership and governing body made an early commitment to the process, providing support and direction through all phases.
- The superintendent, principal, internal coordinators and administration provided necessary resources and established open communication between all stakeholders.
- The school leadership has the autonomy to run the day to day operations of the school with minimal involvement of the school or central office.
- The Internal Coordinators and the Planning Teams provided for a collaborative group with valuable cross-sectional experience.
- The school's Self Study provided detailed information, data and articulated goals and expectations to all stakeholders.
- The leadership is to be commended for the trust and support provided to those people tasked with leading the process to completion.
- There was a collegial climate among all participants in the process. The leadership of various teams provided direction and maintained focus on the tasks at hand.
- This leadership team is focused on ensuring that the plan which they have developed is continually monitored and implemented with appropriate support and funding as required.
- The leadership team has been established with a purpose, planning to establish meetings to review formative and summative assessment results.
- The leadership and team members have committed to insuring ongoing review and analysis of information and data to update the plans as needed.
- There is evidence that the district's governing body has regularly scheduled meetings throughout the year and that the school leadership presented information at meetings regarding the accreditation process.
- The leadership and governing body supported the effort and provided the autonomy to the internal coordinators, teams and committees to make the process successful.
- The Board has in place policies and procedures that govern all aspects of the operation of the school which are updated as changes occur.
- The school meets all the legal requirements to operate in the state of New Jersey.
- The leadership of the school is effective as demonstrated by the great strides made in academics.
- The governance and leadership have addressed the needs of their students in a fair and ethical manner.
- The school environment is friendly and respectful as witnessed by our walk-throughs, meetings with students, teachers and parents at the school.

### **Recommendations**

**In this section, the Team lists any recommendations to the school system 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 system is not required to accept or act on them.**

None

### Recommended Monitoring Issues

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

No.	Requirement of the Standard or Indicator	Recommended Action
	NONE	

# SCHOOL SYSTEM IMPROVEMENT PLANNING STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION

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

## B. EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT THE ASSESSMENT OF THIS STANDARD

Evidence	
<i><b>For All Systems:</b></i>	<b>Visiting Team</b>
Data and information from interviews and observations	X
Data from surveys	X
The system's strategic and/or long-range plan to improve student performance	X
The system's long-range finance plan	X
The system's long-range facilities plan	X
The system's long-range technology plan	X
The system’s staff development plan	X
The system's development/institutional advancement plan, if applicable	X
The system’s curriculum review and revision plan	X
The system's enrollment plan, if applicable	X
Evidence of stakeholder input into the system's plans	X
Evidence of how the system's plans are communicated to the community of stakeholders	X
System planning, including planning for improvement in student performance, organizational capacity, finances, facilities, and technology	X

Periodic reviews of the system's plans	X
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## C. THE VISITING TEAM'S OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Observations

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

#### **The Visiting Team observed that:**

- The system makes efforts to communicate with and include some student groups in the dissemination of long-term plans.
- The system is responsive to stakeholder feedback and has slowed down the rollout of initiatives.
- The system develops a strategic plan for growth and improvement that is supported by the community of stakeholders. The system ensures that all component schools develop and implement plans for growth and improvement that are aligned with the system's plan.
- The system bases its strategic plan on longitudinal data regarding the achievement and performance of the students and the system's capacity to produce the levels of student achievement and performance expected by its stakeholders.
- The system guarantees that its action plans address the relevant programs, services, operations, and resources to support the attainment of the goals of the strategic plan.
- The system monitors implementation of its strategic plan and revises it as needed based on required internal and external reviews to ensure it is producing the intended results.

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

- The system maintains an ongoing dialogue, formally and informally, with K-12 instructors (as well as administrators and other stakeholders) regarding best practices across courses and levels.
- The system encourages faculty and other stakeholders to share professional development ideas and suggestions with supervisors and peers.
- System leadership has embraced a healthy understanding of and approach to the Advanced Placement Program as a culminating experience.
- The AP culture encourages students and teachers to take risks, step outside of their comfort zones, and develop a lifelong love of learning.
- This AP culture is values-driven rather than numbers-based, consistent with the school's mission and beliefs, and observable in student/teacher interactions in and outside of the classroom.
- The growth mindset that culminates in an AP experience is scaffolded, beginning in pre-K.
- The system uses social media (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, #nanuetmissiondriven) to share its planning for Growth and Improvement, providing evidence to stakeholders in the community.
- The system recognizes and is sensitive to the limited time and energy of teachers.

### 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:**

- Further communication via all social media platforms, as well as paper and Digital Backpack, to share planning, implementation and review of school improvement at all levels.

**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:** The school system 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 system’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 SYSTEM'S ADHERENCE TO THIS STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION

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

### B. EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT THE TEAM'S ASSESSMENT

Evidence	Visiting Team
Data from Observations and Interviews	X
Current operating budget (for main campus and each branch campus)	X
Certified external audit letter conducted within the last two years (for main campus and each branch)	X
Student tuition and fee schedule (if applicable)	X
Long-range financial plan	X
Schedule of student tuition and fees (for non-public and proprietary institutions)	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, FINDINGS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Observations

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

## Observations for the School System

- The district promotes sound fiscal policies, including a system of checks and balances.
  - Evidence exists that the governance and leadership maintains appropriate oversight and control of funds.
  - The district develops an annual budget that reflects appropriate consideration for all areas of operation.
  - School leadership and staff are involved in budget development and fund allocation for the school.
  - The District External Annual Audit Report is available and certified to be satisfactory.
  - The financial resources of the district are sufficient to provide defined educational programs
  - Evidence was provided through interviews and documentation that the board and school leadership exercises judicious control and analysis of all budget aspects that affect revenue, expenses, and disbursing of funds.
  - The district maintains a facilities plan that prioritizes projects based on analysis of need.
  - Initially, the fiscal budget is presented to the board by the Superintendent and/or Business manager to be voted on and on display as required by law.
  - Board Policies and Procedures are in place and available on the website to insure all financial responsibilities and processes are addressed.
  - There is appropriate budgeting for staff development.
  - Teachers indicate they are provided with what they need in the classroom.
- 
- The school promotes sound fiscal policies, including a system of checks and balances
  - School leadership and staff are involved in budget development and fund allocation for the school.
  - Staff has some input into building operational spending based on classroom need.

## Recommendations

**In this section, the Team lists any recommendations to the school system 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 system is not required to accept or act on them.**

### Recommendations for the School System

None

## Recommended Monitoring Issues

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

No.	Requirement of the Standard or Indicator	Recommended Action
	NONE	

## FACILITIES STANDARD

**The Standard:** School system 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 system. 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 SYSTEM'S ADHERENCE TO THIS STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION

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

### B. EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT THE TEAM'S ASSESSMENT

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

### C. THE VISITING TEAM'S OBSERVATIONS, FINDINGS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Observations

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

#### Observations for the School System

- Older buildings present many challenges, but Nanuet is prepared to meet them through continuous, positive changes.
- Nanuet School District demonstrates its commitment to the future of the district's students through facilities projects like the STEM spaces in the Middle School and High School.

- Nanuet School District demonstrates its commitment to social-emotional learning through new and updated initiatives like the Social Heart space in the High School, the equestrian and Outdoor Education Center, updates begun in the auditorium, and the change to a common lunch period with kiosks that allow students to lunch and learn at the same time.
- Nanuet School District demonstrates its commitment to safety through its use of ID-scan technology and digital cameras for monitoring throughout the facilities as well as a Capital Improvements plan that includes funding to upgrade the HVAC systems, transition to filtered water and water bottle-filling stations instead of water fountains, and LED lighting in all of the school facilities.
- The district is currently examining ways to increase efficiency in heating, for example using dual fuel capacity heating systems.
- The district is also trying to increase maintenance efficiency by using an automated program for requests; it is currently considering changing to a more efficient program.

## Recommendations

**In this section, the Team lists any recommendations to the school system 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 system is not required to accept or act on them.**

### Recommendations for the School System

- The boys’ bathrooms in the High School have built-in partitions that maintain students’ privacy, but the girls’ bathrooms do not. The access doors to the girls’ bathrooms in the High School should remain closed for safety and privacy.
- Doors in the girl’s bathroom do not lock. Student need someone to hold the door for privacy

## 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 system’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 system does not meet and, therefore, must be added as a stipulation to the school system’s accreditation.**

No.	Requirement of the Standard or Indicator	Recommended Action
	NONE	

## SCHOOL SYSTEM CLIMATE AND ORGANIZATION STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION

**The Standard:** The school system’s organizational structure and climate facilitate achievement of its core values as expressed in the philosophy/mission. The school system’s 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 system 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 SYSTEM'S ADHERENCE TO THIS STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION

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

### B. EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT THE TEAM'S ASSESSMENT

Evidence	Visiting Team
Data from Observations and Interviews	X
Organizational chart for the school 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 system climate and organization	X

### C. THE VISITING TEAM’S OBSERVATIONS, FINDINGS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Observations

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

**Observations for the School System**

- The Visiting Team observed a school climate committed to the personal development of students
- The Visiting Team detected an organizational structure geared to prepare and inspire graduates to apply learning, in a continually shifting, inter-reliant domain
- The Visiting Team determined that all staff (teachers, administration, SRP, et al.) are evaluated regularly based on professional standards, where expectations are communicated clearly
- The Visiting Team established that areas of the survey, within this standard, found not to meet expectations have been recognized, analyzed, with stakeholders, and addressed with appropriate stakeholder input
- The Visiting Team received confirmation that members on the Planning Team felt reaffirmation as to, “How truly collaborative” the Nanuet School District is

Recommendations

In this section, the Team lists any recommendations to the school system 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 system is not required to accept or act on them.

**Recommendations for the School System**

- The Visiting Team recommends direct collaborative interactions amongst stakeholders regarding Planning Team activities and decisions

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 system’s term of accreditation.

No.	Requirement of the Standard or Indicator	Recommended Action
	NONE	

Recommended Stipulation

In this section, the Team lists any requirement(s) of this Standard and/or its Indicators of Quality the school system does not meet and, therefore, must be added as a stipulation to the school system’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 system 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 SYSTEM'S ADHERENCE TO THIS STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION

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

### B. EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT THE TEAM'S ASSESSMENT

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

### C. THE VISITING TEAM'S OBSERVATIONS, FINDINGS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Observations

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

#### Observations for the School System

- The Nanuet School District adheres to local, state, and federal government health and safety requirements by conducting and documenting the required type and number of emergency drills each school year.
- The Nanuet School District currently uses an emergency messaging service that uses email and text alerts to inform staff, students, and parents/guardians of emergencies.

- The Nanuet School District uses a single point of entry with security guards in all schools. These professionals have positive relationships with staff, faculty, and students.
- The Nanuet School district ensures the health and safety of its Middle School and High School athletes by providing an athletic trainer on campus during sporting events and a doctor on site during football games.
- Current plans to improve school security include moving district buses so they are housed on site in case of emergency as well as a planned patio beyond the Global Learning Commons in the High School to provide more common space to deter senior students from leaving the campus during common lunch.
- Further proposals from facilities to increase security include the consideration of “man traps” in each building so visitors could not gain access to buildings without scanning their identification first as well as possible entry gates to the campus to prevent unauthorized vehicles and visitors.

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

- The Nanuet School District provides mental health training for much of its faculty as well as the nursing staff to assist them with handling mental health concerns of students and staff.
- Of particular note is the Nanuet Family Resource Center, run by Ms. RoseAnn Mercado, district employee. This organization works to “wrap around” the students in the Nanuet School District’s needs to include family support, student development, family and community engagement, and early childhood development opportunities and assistance. By identifying and assisting with the needs of the local community, the FRC assists the district in creating a healthy and safe environment for all.

## Recommendations

**In this section, the Team lists any recommendations to the school system 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 system is not required to accept or act on them.**

### Recommendations for the School System

None

## Recommended Monitoring Issues

**In this section, the Team lists any requirements of this Standard and/or its Indicators of Quality that require ongoing monitoring. Monitoring Issues refer to requirements that are not completely absent but that are met only partially and are either in need of completion or improvement. Monitoring issues must be addressed satisfactorily by the mid-term of the school system’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 system does not meet and, therefore, must be added as a stipulation to the school system'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 system 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 system since these three components have such an impact on the total school system 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 <b>MEETS</b> this Standard for Accreditation
	It is the Visiting Team's assessment is that the school <b>DOES NOT MEET</b> this Standard for Accreditation. The evidence that supports this assessment is shown in the Recommended Stipulations shown in Section C, below.

### B. EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT THE TEAM'S ASSESSMENT

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

### C. THE VISITING TEAM'S OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Observations

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

**The Visiting Team observed that:**

- The district provides appropriate training in the use of the district-wide curriculum and professional development system, Atlas. Vertical and horizontal curricula are mapped out and developed by both specific and cross-curricular teacher committees.
- The district conducts a review of all curricula annually.
- The district is committed to providing a wide variety of courses available for students at the high school level and bases the creation of new class offerings on interviews addressing current students' interests as well surveys completed by alumni of their Nanuet School District on their post-secondary career choices.
- The district makes a commendable effort in providing unique educational opportunities for its students with special needs throughout all grade levels, and will continue to expand these opportunities with new projects like the construction of its state-of-the-art kitchen at their outdoor education center.
- Staff report that adequate support is provided from the administration and board for all budgetary needs in educational programming and the acquisition of curriculum and materials.
- The district's implementation of the STEM program in the elementary schools serves as a model for cross-curricular critical thinking and the district's objective of implementing the 4Cs into its curriculum.

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

- The district's Outdoor Education Center has become not only a source of pride for the district, but also a wonderful tool in supplementing the regular curriculum with hands-on and integrative lessons for students of all ages.

## 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 Nanuet School District should make available to all its stakeholders an educational program guide (as it plans to do in the summer 2019).
- The Nanuet School District should continue to explore opportunities to expand and diversify their educational offerings by looking at alternate solutions to deliver course content and provide learning activities.

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

### B. EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT THE TEAM'S ASSESSMENT

Evidence	Visiting Team
Data from Observations and Interviews	X
Example of student transcript	X
Example student report card	X
Reports of the results of state assessments administered to students	X
Reports of the results of other standards-based assessments administered to students (DRA, AIMSweb)	X
Reports of the results of locally-developed assessments administered to students	X
Policies related to assessment of student learning	X
Examples of social media information available to the school community and the greater Nanuet community (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram)	X
Examples of expansion of student support services to include programs addressing social and emotional needs of students to be successful in challenging and rigorous academic courses	X

### C. THE VISITING TEAM'S OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Observations

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

### **The Visiting Team observed that the District**

- Employs results of state-mandated testing to perform year-by-year analyses of student achievement
- Employs the results of other standards-based assessments administered to students (such as DRA, AIMSweb) to perform periodic and year-by-year analyses of student achievement
- Employs locally-developed assessments; the analyses of which inform subsequent instruction. Moreover, these assessments provide additional student achievement information by means of periodic and year-by-year analyses
- Employs a K-12 vision for content and skill development coherence
- Has established and has fostered intra- and inter-school articulation relative to student progress. This includes, but is not limited to, grade level meetings, cross-grade level meetings, cross-curricular meetings, as well meetings between and among teachers and administrators relative to students' normative school transition
- Has developed, nurtured, and supported the importance and the effectiveness of data-driven instruction to provide differentiated opportunities for students to attain content and skill mastery
- Employs results of data analyses to drive grade-, school-, and district-wide professional development
- Has implemented a standards-based reporting system to parents for student in grades K-4
- Has implemented an online portal accessible to high school students and parents/guardians and to grades 5-6 and 7-8 parents

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

- It is readily apparent that the District recognizes that in order for students to thrive in an environment of academic challenge and of continuous improvement, social-emotional supports need to be in place. To that end, it is praiseworthy that the District employs a cadre of counselors, psychologists, and social workers to assist and to address students' (and families') needs that may impact school success.
- The District has committed to administering—at no cost—the PSAT to all ninth grade students. The District then employs the College Board program *AP Potential* to identify students for participation in pre-AP and AP courses. Moreover, the District employs *Naviance* to help identify students whose characteristics and traits might also predict success in rigorous academic programs.
- Recognizing that a 24% *opt-out* rate on mandated state tests might skew results—and, thereby, might misdirect professional development initiatives, the District developed local common assessments, aligned with appropriate outcomes, as additional data points relative to student achievement. Striving for validity and reliability of local common assessments, the District collaborates with BOCES and with other districts with respect to their development.
- Devising and implementing a master schedule scheme that facilitates opportunities for effective teaching team planning (grade level teams, content teams, cross-grade level teams, student support teams, and for K-12 articulation)

## **Recommendations**



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

**The Visiting Team recommends:**

- Continue to be mindful relative to the increasing number of families for whom English is not a primary language when considering the dissemination of written and/or digital communication

**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 system 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 SYSTEM'S ADHERENCE TO THIS STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION

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

### B. EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT THE TEAM'S ASSESSMENT

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

### C. THE VISITING TEAM'S OBSERVATIONS, FINDINGS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Observations

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

#### Observations for the School System

- Nanuet School District has a comprehensive counseling plan that is being implemented throughout the district. Social Emotional Learning is supported throughout the district and additional building level services such as counseling is available to students in grades K-12.
- The administration and staff is working to shift the mindsets of faculty, staff, and students in efforts to better support mental health and trauma informed care. This work is supported by a number of programs that have been developed for faculty, staff, and students such as Yoga and Mindfulness activities, implicit bias training, and the RULER Mental Health Social Emotional Program.
- Post-Secondary Student Exit Summary Reports include detailed information about student learning characteristics, academic achievement, and development (social/emotional). The details included in the summary reports provide clear goals and recommendations for students to thrive after graduating.
- The Special Education Department at Nanuet School District is fully supported and the administration strives to service students without making out-of-district placements (special education) unless absolutely necessary.
- Nanuet School District uses a co-teaching model to support effective teaching for students who have IEP's. The co-teaching model allows for smaller student to teacher ratios and greater support structures in Life Skill courses.
- Faculty and staff partner with parents to educate them on their rights to obtain supports and services by providing families with copies of the Parent's Guide for Special Education in New York State (annually) and staff fully engages with families throughout the process.
- Nanuet School District has implemented a common lunch period to allow all students, faculty, and staff to engage in lunch during the same time. The common lunch period also serves as an additional opportunity for students to seek support services and meet with key staff and faculty such as guidance counselors.
- Nanuet School District adheres to USDA guidelines for the operation of its food service programs and collaborates with the Outdoor Education Center to grow healthy fruits and vegetables, which are used to make meals for students.

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

- The Nanuet School District is implementing Comprehensive School Counseling Plans in each school within the district to support the social development of students. The administration is heavily invested in the Social Emotional Learning and Development of students, faculty, and staff and has supported this work by delivering a number of professional development sessions focused on implicit bias, mental health, and trauma informed care. The district has also conducted curriculum audits to vet materials and texts and remove any items that inflict biasness, racism, etc.

## Recommendations

**In this section, the Team lists any recommendations to the school system 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 system is not required to accept or act on them.**

### Recommendations for the School System

- The Nanuet School District (administration) should review student service related policies to ensure alignment with student needs and applicable laws.

### 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 system’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 system does not meet and, therefore, must be added as a stipulation to the school system’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 SYSTEM'S ADHERENCE TO THIS STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION

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

### B. EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT THE TEAM'S ASSESSMENT

Evidence	Visiting Team
Data from Observations and Interviews	X
Samples of student publications—e.g., yearbook, student newspaper, literary magazine	X
Budget for all athletic activities	X
Budget for all non-athletic activities	X
Policies on academic eligibility	X
Policies related to student life and student activities	X
<b><i>For boarding school systems</i></b>	
Descriptions of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Programs to develop healthy relationships with adults</li> <li>• Plans for continuous and responsible supervision by responsible adults</li> </ul>	
Descriptions of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provisions for student privacy</li> <li>• Recreational programs</li> <li>• Provisions for religious practice</li> </ul>	

### C. THE VISITING TEAM'S OBSERVATIONS, FINDINGS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Observations

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

### **Observations for the School System**

- Nanuet School District has implemented a common lunch period, which allows students an opportunity to meet for various club activities. Space was also renovated in the cafeteria to provide additional meeting space for students.
- Nanuet School District has a clearly defined Co-curricular Eligibility Policy that encourages student participation in activities but also supports academic achievement by limiting eligibility if students fail courses.
- The school district offers 50+ non-athletic clubs for students in middle and high school.
- Nanuet School District holds annual awards ceremonies to recognize student achievements and further encourage high levels of engagement in programs (academic, extra curricular, etc.). Students at Nanuet School District are also eligible to receive awards from Rockland County during events such as the Annual Black Achievement Awards Ceremony.
- Nanuet School District has a thriving Family Resource Center dedicated to supporting families and aligning them with resources to help enhance the educational experience for their children while enrolled at Nanuet School District. The FRC Director is actively partnering with the administration and securing funding through grants in efforts to expand opportunities for Extended Learning and Early Childhood programming.
- Nanuet School District fully funds sporting programs and has existing policies and procedures to control costs associated with running athletic programs.
- Nanuet School District leverages existing social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter to highlight student achievements and school activities.

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

- Nanuet School District provides students with hands-on experiences through project-based learning activities at the Outside Education Center. Activities and programs include Farm-To-Table, Mindfulness (meditation), Apiology (bees), Reenactment of Civil War.

### **Recommendations**

**In this section, the Team lists any recommendations to the school system 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 system is not required to accept or act on them.**

### **Recommendations for the School System**

The Nanuet School District should review existing communication plans (internal/external) and make modifications to improve communication with stakeholder groups and the larger community. Effective communication with the larger community will help the administration gain buy-in and support for major initiatives while raising awareness and general understanding. During interactions with

stakeholders (students, parents, staff, and faculty) a number of stakeholders were unaware of the accreditation process and were unaware of the results of the initial self-study that was conducted by Nanuet Schools District. This example highlights the need to improve communication among 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 system’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 system does not meet and, therefore, must be added as a stipulation to the school system’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 system’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 <b>MEETS</b> this Standard for Accreditation
	It is the Visiting Team's assessment is that the school <b>DOES NOT MEET</b> this Standard for Accreditation. The evidence that supports this assessment is shown in the Recommended Stipulations shown in Section C, below.

### B. EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT THE TEAM'S ASSESSMENT

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

### C. THE VISITING TEAM'S OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Observations



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

**The Visiting Team observed that:**

- The district's acquisition of new technologies is the fruit of efforts and decisions of a team; these decisions are based on the needs of the district's students and the curricula.
- The district's use of highlighting its accomplishments and the successes of its students via social media is commendable and extensive.
- The district adequately trains all new staff in the use of educational software and applications (AESOP, Google Education Suite, My Learning Plan, et al).
- The district provides training for all fifth grade parents each year on the topics of digital use/digital parenting.
- The district resolves all IT issues in a timely manner and have staff available to serve each component school.
- The partnership with the Boards of Cooperative Education Services of New York to rent technological equipment saves money and allows the district to update equipment in a timely manner.

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

- Of particular note is the Nanuet Technology Department, run by Ms. Ursula Carbone, district employee. Her comprehensive knowledge base provided enlightenment and insight into the department's role in the education of the district's staff and 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:**

- The Nanuet School District offer training opportunities for teaching students' parents/guardians how to use the online applications (like Home Access) and the benefits it has to their students' successes.
- The Nanuet School District Technology team should utilize the data from social media analytics to analyze how efficiently parents are making use of the platforms to receive information. The team suggests that the data be used to communicate with parents effectively.

## 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
X	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
X	NONE	

## THE PLAN FOR GROWTH AND IMPROVEMENT

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

The *Achieving Excellence System-Wide* protocol is based in the principles and concepts of strategic planning. Therefore, the protocol requires the school system to be forward thinking, not focusing so much on the past and past accomplishments but, instead, focusing on the future—what does the school system 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 system 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 and Organizational Capacity.

Developing a Plan for Growth and Improvement involves:

- Establishing a vision for the school system by creating or reaffirming a statement of mission.
- Identifying a set of beliefs that will serve as the school system's ethical code.
- Developing a profile of the knowledge, skills, and qualities the school system expects of its graduates.
- Identifying the areas of student performance and organizational capacity that are the priorities for growth and improvement.
- Developing action plans to achieve the improvement 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 and Organizational Capacity:

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

As part of its planning for growth and improvement, the school system conducted an in-depth self-examination of the curriculum, instructional program, and assessment practices for those components of its educational program that are deemed essential to the areas of student performance that have been identified as the priorities for growth and improvement. Using the Middle States Indicators of Quality for Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment, this self-assessment required the system to look carefully at its written curriculum, how the curriculum is delivered to the students, and the practices used to assess the degree to which the students are achieving the learning goals of the curriculum.

The overall purpose of this self-assessment was to identify those aspects of the school system's curriculum, instructional pedagogy, or assessment practices that need to be developed or improved to increase the likelihood that the school will be able to achieve the goals it set for growing and improving student performance. Areas identified for development and/or improvement should be reflected in the action plans for the measurable student performance and organizational capacity goals that are the heart of the Plan for Growth and Improvement.

**IMPORTANT: The Team's observations and recommendations regarding the Plan for Growth and Improvement must be read in conjunction with the Plan as presented by the school system in its Self-Study Document.**

## A. STUDENT PERFORMANCE AND ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY OBJECTIVES

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

To identify these priority areas, the Planning Team asked itself:

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

Specifying clear and measurable student performance objectives identifies the school system'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 system. 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 system seeks to realize from its mission, as expressed in its Profile of Graduates. Not only should the objectives be related to the school system's mission, but where there is also a district or system plan, the objectives should be linked to one or more of the district 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.

## School System Objectives/Goals

### A.1. Objective #1

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

By the year 2025 Nanuet School District students will demonstrate a raised awareness of the Core Values as identified in the Belief Statements of our Mission.

	YES	NO
<b>Is the objective:</b>		
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	
<b>Does the objective:</b>		
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	
<b>Does the school:</b>		
Have sufficient energy and resources to support the implementation of the action plans and the achievement of the objectives?	X	
Have an effective and efficient way to gather data to assess the progress of the objective?	X	
Is the objective reasonable and achievable?	X	

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

- The Visiting Team recommends the District’s Planning Team ensure all stakeholders, particularly teachers, students, and parents, be inculcated into the purpose and specific meaning of the Mission Statement and be well-versed about the Graduate Profile.
- The Visiting Team recommends the District Planning Team hold all of their meetings with all stakeholders (particularly students and parents).
- The Visiting Team recommends the District Planning Team revise their Action Plan for this objective to include a specific, progressive plan inculcating parent awareness and involvement.

### A.2. Action Plan for Objective #1:

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

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

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

- N/A

### A.3. Objective #2:

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

By 2025, Nanuet students will improve their academic and lifelong, learning skills, allowing them to successfully pursue post-secondary options as measured by the following

#### Measurable Goal:

- A **10% increase** in the number of AP students in grades 9, 10, 11, & 12.  
Baseline: 2015-2016 School year **110** total students took AP classes.
- A **10% increase** in the number of AP exams administered at Nanuet Senior High School.  
Baseline: 2015-2016 school year **168** AP exams were administered.
- A **3% increase** in the number of students scoring 3 or higher on AP exams.  
Baseline: 2015-2016 school year **95** total students taking AP exams scored 3 or higher.

- d. A % in the number of students scoring proficient or advanced in NWEA assessment.  
 Baseline: **Zero**, this is a new assessment.

	YES	NO
<b>Is the objective:</b>		
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	
<b>Does the objective:</b>		
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	
<b>Does the school:</b>		
Have sufficient energy and resources to support the implementation of the action plans and the achievement of the objectives?	X	
Have an effective and efficient way to gather data to assess the progress of the objective?	X	
Is the objective reasonable and achievable?	X	

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

- The Visiting Team recommends the District Planning Team consider reevaluating their Action Plan goal of "3% proficiency" following analysis of the first year data to ensure rigor is achieved.
- The Visiting Team recommends the District Planning Team revise the persons/groups responsible on the Action Plan to include the relevant AP teachers in a majority of the actions pertaining to the AP exam goals.
- The Visiting Team recommends the District Planning Team publicize the outcomes of this Action Plan to ensure parents and students recognize achievement and success.

**A.4. Action Plan for Objective #2:**

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

Does this action plan:	YES	NO
Include strategies/action steps that are comprehensive in scope?	X	
Include a logical sequence of strategies and/or action steps?	X	
Outline clearly and in detail the action steps to be taken in the first two to three years of the plan?	X	
Include enough activities to ensure that the objective will be achieved?	X	
Address as many aspects of the institution's programs, activities, and services as appropriate?	X	

Address aspects of the Middle States Standards for Accreditation identified as weak in the institution's self-assessment of how well it meets the Standards?	X	
Identify the resources required to implement the action steps?	X	
Identify the persons/groups responsible for implementing each action step?	X	
Vary the groups/individuals responsible so that the burden for implementation does not fall on just one or two individuals?	X	
Include clear indicators of success for each action step so the institution knows what action steps have been implemented and with what result?	X	
Establish reasonable timelines for implementing the action steps?	X	
Demonstrate discipline and reasonableness by spreading action steps throughout the entire life of the plan so as not to overwhelm the time, energy, and resources available for implementing a plan?	X	

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

- N/A

#### A.5. Objective #3:

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

#### Objective #1

##### **Nanuet Organizational Objective**

By 2025 the Nanuet School District will develop K-12 so that 20% more students participate in the 4Cs of Learning, Communication, Collaboration, Critical Thinking, and Creativity.

- A. Student Communication – Student Communication includes receiving feedback from others in class, receiving feedback online from someone other than a teacher, using chat or video, using web tools to receive online information, writing online, and student created digital portfolios.

**Baseline Year 2018**

**12% of students on average participated monthly in Communication lessons**

- B. Student Collaboration – Student Collaboration includes collaborating online with classmates, collaborating online with teachers, collaborating online with students at other schools, and use of an online space for documents.

**Baseline Year 2018**

**27% of students on average participated monthly in Collaboration lessons**

- C. Student Critical Thinking – Student Critical Thinking includes collecting and analyzing data, conduct experiments or perform measurements, conduct research, identify and solve authentic problems.

**Baseline Year 2018**

**32% of students on average participated monthly in Critical Thinking lessons**

- D. Student Creativity – Student Creativity includes creating art, music, and movies, creating animations, demonstrations, models, or simulations, develop and present multimedia presentations, and use a digital camera.



**Baseline Year 2018**

**17% of students on average participated monthly in Creativity lessons**

	YES	NO
<b>Is the objective:</b>		
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	
<b>Does the objective:</b>		
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	
<b>Does the school:</b>		
Have sufficient energy and resources to support the implementation of the action plans and the achievement of the objectives?	X	
Have an effective and efficient way to gather data to assess the progress of the objective?	X	
Is the objective reasonable and achievable?	X	

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

- The Visiting Team recommends the District Planning Team revise the persons/groups responsible on the Action Plan to include the teachers wherever relevant.
- The Visiting Team recommends the District Planning Team publicize the outcomes of this Action Plan to ensure parents and students recognize achievement and success.

**A.6. Action Plan for Objective #3:**

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

<b>Does this action plan:</b>	YES	NO
Include strategies/action steps that are comprehensive in scope?	X	
Include a logical sequence of strategies and/or action steps?	X	
Outline clearly and in detail the action steps to be taken in the first two to three years of the plan?	X	
Include enough activities to ensure that the objective will be achieved?	X	
Address as many aspects of the institution's programs, activities, and services as appropriate?	X	
Address aspects of the Middle States Standards for Accreditation identified as weak in the institution's self-assessment of how well it meets the Standards?	X	
Identify the resources required to implement the action steps?	X	

Identify the persons/groups responsible for implementing each action step?	X	
Vary the groups/individuals responsible so that the burden for implementation does not fall on just one or two individuals?	X	
Include clear indicators of success for each action step so the institution knows what action steps have been implemented and with what result?	X	
Establish reasonable timelines for implementing the action steps?	X	
Demonstrate discipline and reasonableness by spreading action steps throughout the entire life of the plan so as not to overwhelm the time, energy, and resources available for implementing a plan?	X	

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

- N/A

**Based on the evidence the Team saw and heard from the school system's community of stakeholders, what is the determination of the Team regarding whether there is sufficient understanding and support for and resources dedicated to the objectives/goals to indicate that the objectives/goals are reasonable and achievable?**

<b>The Team's determination is that the objectives/goals are:</b>				
<b>Reasonable</b>	<b>x</b>	<b>Yes</b>		<b>No</b>
<b>Achievable</b>	<b>x</b>	<b>Yes</b>		<b>No</b>

## **B. THE VISITING TEAM’S OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Observations**

**In this section, the Team lists any general observations regarding the school system's objectives/goals for improving the areas of student performance and organizational capacity that were identified through the self-study process as the priorities for growth and improvement.**

#### **Observations for the School System**

The team was provided evidence that there is sufficient understanding and support from all stakeholders

### **Recommendations**

**In this section, the Team lists any recommendations to the school system regarding how it can improve its objectives/goals for growing and improving the areas of student performance and organizational capacity identified by the self-study process as the priorities for growth and improvement. Recommendations are suggestions by the Team, but the school system is not required to accept or act on them.**

## Recommendations for the School System

None

## C. ACTION PLANS

Action plans describe the methods the school system 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 system in improvement activities for the next seven years. Action plans should be specific and tell in detail how the school system 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 plan(s) for the performance/capacity objectives in the school system’s Plan for Growth and Improvement according to the criteria for effective action plans.

**What level of understanding of and support for the action plans did the Team see and hear among the school system’s community of stakeholders?**

All stakeholders understand/ believe the action plans will support stated objectives

**To what degree are the action plans clearly stated and sharply focused on the actions to be taken to achieve the intended outcomes and targeted improvements in student performance and organizational capacity?**

Action plans included multiple activities that engage the school system in improvement activities for the next seven years. Action plans are be specific and tell in detail how the school system will accomplish its objectives

## D. THE VISITING TEAM’S OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Observations

**In this section, the Team lists any general observations regarding the school system's action plans for improving the areas of student performance and organizational capacity that were identified through the self-study process as the priorities for growth and improvement.**

### Observations for the School System

- The Nanuet School District has demonstrated effective, efficient, collaborative forward-thinking and planning for the continuous quality improvement of all Middle States Association standards. In accordance with MSA protocol, the district’s vision, mission and strategic efforts are evident and impressive. The stakeholders (a cross-section of representatives from the schools and community-at-large) declared and exhibited a genuine commitment to a unity of purpose. Under the leadership of the Superintendent of Schools with input from stakeholders, shared decision-making focused on the “best interest of students” was the priority. The Visiting Team observed the objectives were clearly stated and understood by stakeholders.
- The future of the district is extremely bright because of the bright and caring leadership at every level of the organization---and most importantly, because everyone believes in protecting the integrity of all of its adults and children.

## Recommendations

**In this section, the Team lists any recommendations to the school system regarding how it can improve its action plans for growing and improving the areas of student performance and organizational capacity identified by the self-study process as the priorities for growth and improvement. Recommendations are suggestions by the Team, but the school system is not required to accept or act on them.**

### Recommendations for the School System

None

## Recommended Monitoring Issues

**In this section, the Team lists any requirements for 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 system’s accreditation.**

Requirement of the Protocol	Action Recommended
NONE	

## Recommended Stipulations

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

Requirement of the Protocol	Action Recommended
NONE	

## ACCREDITATION RECOMMENDATION

After its visit to the school system has been completed, and after considering the evidence seen and heard during the visit, the Middle States Association's Visiting Team is charged with making a recommendation to the Commissions on Elementary and Secondary Schools regarding the accreditation action the Commissions should take.

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

**Nanuet School District – Granted Full Accreditation**

## NEXT STEPS

As Nanuet School System proceeds with the implementation of its Plan for Growth and Improvement, there are a number of “next steps” the school system 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 school systems. The Standards also represent the organizational “building blocks” that need to be in place to produce high levels of student performance. An accredited school system 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 system using the Achieving Excellence System-Wide protocol, it does so with the understanding that the school system will make a good faith effort to implement the Plan for Growth and Improvement that served as one of the bases for accreditation.
- **Submit an Annual Profile and Nominations to Serve on Visiting Team.**  
As a requirement to maintain its accreditation, the school system is required to submit an Annual Profile in which it either confirms or revises basic data about the school system. A second requirement is that the school system nominates members of its staff to serve on Visiting Teams to other school systems.
- **Conduct Periodic Reviews of the Plan for Growth and Improvement**  
While Middle States does not “collect” evidence of the school system’s annual review, the school system 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 system 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 system 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 system’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 system has implemented a planning ethic and the school system’s improvement process has been ongoing as expected, preparing for the next team visit should be an extension of work already underway.

## CONCLUSION

Good afternoon.

I am Pat Impreveduto, chair of the Middle States Validation Team to Nanuet School District. I am pleased to see so many members of the school community present to hear our report. Our team has had an enriching and rewarding experience working with you over the past four days. We will leave this district at the end of this report feeling that we have had a full and rich experience. We appreciate the candor with which you have shared your deepest concerns and greatest wishes

Nanuet has been engaged over the past 24 months in a self-examination and evaluation of every aspect of its school district using the *Excellence By Design* protocol.

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 3 to 4 weeks.

At the conclusion of this oral report, we will leave your school. As per Middle States tradition, we will not entertain any questions or enter into any discussion regarding this report. You will have the opportunity to ask questions about our findings after you have received and reviewed the written report.

At the outset, I want to recognize and thank publicly the other members of our Team for their service to you and to the Middle States Association . I have found this to be a highly collegial, thoughtful and diverse team. They are an outstanding team of educators. I do not know if you are aware of this, but these educators are all volunteers who have given their own professional and personal time to provide this service to you.

They have worked hard day and night to conduct as thorough of an evaluation of your district as is possible. It is a tribute to their professionalism and expertise that they were able to coalesce as a team so quickly and to produce such fine work in service to the Nanuet School District.

I believe you owe them your thanks for their service to your school.

PAUSE

We are here because you invited us. You asked us to study the work that you are doing and your plans for the future.

WE commend you for selecting the *Excellence By design* protocol for your accreditation. The EBD protocol requires that the school community take a critical look at itself through the completion of a self-study. Here the school must reach out to the various stakeholders, seeking their opinions and suggestions. These stakeholders are the members of the school community that have an interest in the district, its students, and the curriculum. The stakeholders include teachers, administrators, parents, community members, and most of all students. The development of open lines of communications among the various stakeholder groups strengthens the schools ability to identify and meet the needs of their students.

Also. The school district must have a clear and well-defined Mission Statement, supported by a statement of Beliefs.

The Mission Statement provides the direction and focus for the school district. It validates who you are and what you do

PAUSE

I will tell you

After spending a few days here I was reminded of a country music song by Eddie Arnold that went something like this. “Welcome to my world, won’t you come on in. The Team has heard and observed evidence that this is a commonplace in your district. It is evident that staff collaboratively works hard to set this as the expected and not the exception.

The mantra that has presented itself many times is “the Best interest of the kids.” We heard this when we asked how they decided on a student objectives, curriculum selection, program offering, equipment purchases or what is to be served for lunch. “Best interest of the kids” is a foundation base for the Nanuet School District.

Lead by Superintendent Dr. Mark McNeill, and Deputy Superintendent Meredith Fox, and Assistant Superintendent Kevin McCahill, and the principals, who maintain an open door policy encouraging parents, students, and staff to present and share suggestions and modifications, which will provide better experiences for the students. A governing system allows changes to be made in rapid response to an identified need. And a Board of Education who should be commended for cultivating an environment that encourages suggestions and ideas to be nurtured and developed.

“A special Thank You to Christopher Polizzi who’s leadership in the self- study process was invaluable Another important concept shared with the team by parents, school administration, students, and staff is that of” being a family”. This family concept is carefully being supported by all involved in the Nanuet School District starting with superintendent, assistant superintendents and continued by the staff and students, and extended to the parents who trust their children to the safety of this environment.

At this point, there are two factors we must consider in making our accreditation decision. Does the district meet all 12 middle state standards and does the district meet the requirements of the protocol

The visiting team concluded that Nanuet meets all 12 of the standards for accreditation.

The visiting team concludes that Nanuet school district meets the requirements of the Excellence by Design protocol

At this point, this Validation Team is very pleased to recommend to the Middle States Commission on Schools that **Nanuet School District be granted Full Accreditation for the next seven years.**

- You are to be commended for developing a unique administrative structure that provides for the smooth operation of your school district. This structure has facilitated the two “redesigns” of your school- both physical and academic – over the past few years.
- The Visiting Team would especially like to commend Nanuet for the breadth and depth of programs that are offered to students at all levels.

The last issues I wish to present to you in this brief report are my reflections toward the need for Nanuet to move forward after we leave.

Jim Collins, in his book “Good to Great” reflects on what it takes an organization to go from one level to the top level. You are a thriving school district with a strong and ever-improving culture. Collins talks about BHAG’s- “Big Hairy Audacious Goals.”



Robert Kennedy quoted the Old Testament when he said: Without a Vision, the People Die!

His brother John's BHAG was to put a man on the moon. He achieved that Vision.

Walt Disney wanted to put an amusement park in 100's of square miles in a Florida Swamp- He achieved that Vision.

What will Nanuet's BHAG become for the future?  
What will you dare to dream for this special place?  
Dream it, Say it, Do it...

On behalf of my team, we wish to thank all of you for opening your school district to us, for sharing with us your hopes, your dreams, and your concerns, and for your wonderful hospitality. Our experience at Nanuet has been a rich and rewarding.

Many thanks especially go to your Superintendent Dr. Mark McNeill, for his leadership and kind hospitality, and especially Chris Polizzi who was steering the ship from the perspective of the Internal Coordinator role. You owe Chris a great deal of gratitude for the efforts that he expended on your behalf.

We wish all of you in Nanuet School District future success in all your endeavors.

**Thank you**

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