

Context for Middle States Re-Accreditation:

a. What is accreditation and why is it important?

Accreditation is a process many academic institutions undergo in order to build a valid, credible reputation among fellow institutions, students, parents, and the general public. Accreditation validates a school's credentials by certifying that they meet certain criteria

b. What is Middle States?

The Middle States Association (MSA) is a worldwide leader in accreditation and school improvement. For over 125 years, Middle States has been helping school leaders establish and reach their goals, develop strategic plans, promote staff development and advance student achievement. (msa-cess.org)

MSA Mission:

The Commissions on Elementary and Secondary Schools, building on the rich history of the Middle States Association, aspire to improve the quality of education in the United States and around the world by assisting schools to achieve excellence through the process of accreditation, by affirming to the public a member school's trustworthiness and commitment to continuous improvement, by providing the network and resources for the promotion of proven practices.

Profile of an Accredited School

An accredited school:

- Adheres to the Middle States Standards for Accreditation;
- Uses its mission, beliefs, and goals as the basis for daily decision-making;
- Operates in the public interest and in accordance with ethical practice;
- Accepts responsibility for the level of performance of its students;
- Remains committed to continuous improvement in student learning and to its capacity to produce the levels of learning desired and expected by its community;
- Operates in a collegial and collaborative way with all of its stakeholders;
- Sustains its focus on implementing recommendations, addressing monitoring issues and correcting stipulations that may be part of its notification of accreditation and fulfills its maintenance requirements to the Commissions

(msa-cess.org)

c. What protocol is OLMA using and what does this require?

We are implementing the Excellence by Design (ExBD) protocol for our upcoming re-accreditation.

Excellence by Design (ExBD) is a self-study and accreditation protocol that uses strategic planning as a vehicle for establishing objectives for growth and improvement in student performance and in the school's capacity to effect that growth. In addition, the protocol provides for a continuous review of programs and services and of the results of student performance. It also enables diverse constituent groups to participate in charting the future of the institution. (msa-cess.org)

d. What are the details of the Visit?

The MSA Visiting Team will arrive on April 8, 2019 and conduct their study through April 11th. An official welcome dinner will be held on the evening of April 8th. Since hospitality is a trademark of Catherine McAuley and the Sisters of Mercy, it is fitting that we all welcome them into the Circle of Mercy with pride and enthusiasm (**Please mark your calendar for April 8th**).

e. What can I do in anticipation of the visit?

This process is a school-wide undertaking. At some point, you will be asked to contribute to the ExBD protocol. For now, it is important that you familiarize yourself with the accreditation process and talk to your students about the process and why it's so important. Every one of us is a stakeholder in this process. Ultimately, we all need to be conversant on the strategic plan and the measurable objectives. It is likely that you will have an opportunity to speak with the MSA visiting team during their visit.