

***ACCREDITATION FOR
GROWTH
MID-TERM REPORT***

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Introduction

When the Middle States Association grants accreditation to a school, the accreditation action includes several conditions that must be met for the school to retain its accredited status throughout the term of accreditation. These conditions include the expectation that the school will:

1. Continue to meet the Middle States Standards for Accreditation.
2. Comply with all policies of the Middle States Commission that granted the accreditation.
3. Notify the Commission prior to making any substantive changes to the goals for which your school received accreditation.
4. Make a good faith effort to implement your school's improvement plan and to achieve its performance objectives.
5. Conduct at least once annually a formal review of the Plan for Growth and Improvement. Modifications to the action plans should be made as required to keep the Plan meaningful and effective. It is not necessary to notify the Commission's office of these adjustments; however, the record of reviews will be a topic of the Mid-Term Review.
6. Submit an Annual Profile updating statistical data and information about your school.
7. Pay annual membership dues and any applicable fees.
8. Nominate members of your school's professional staff who meet the qualifications for and are willing to serve on an evaluation team. Commission Policy 3.2 requires each school to release at least one staff person per year, when requested, to serve on an evaluation team.
9. During the third year of the accreditation term, submit a Mid-Term Review Report.

10. In the sixth year of your accreditation term, begin a self-study to prepare for the next team visit.

In addition, schools that use *Accreditation for Growth* as their accreditation protocol make several commitments:

A Focus on Student Performance and Growth

- The school committed itself to focusing its improvement efforts on growth and improvement in student performance and the school's capacity to affect that growth and improvement. Improvement efforts are aimed at targeted growth and improvement in student learning, student performance, and student results.

A Culture of Accountability in Student Performance

- The school is committed to student performance objectives that are measurable. There is a viable process for monitoring achievement of the objectives, and there is an accountability system for monitoring accomplishment of the objectives and the action plans to achieve them.

A Planning Ethic

- The school is committed to a continuous clarification of its unique mission, beliefs, and expectations in terms of student performance. The school is action-oriented as shown by the development of long-term strategic action plans that integrate program, services, facilities, and other support systems to address growth needs.

Commitment to Continuous Improvement

- The school is committed to continuous evaluation, an annual review process, peer review, and a dynamic process with the flexibility to modify action plans.

Involvement of Representative Constituents

- The school is committed to involving a broad spectrum of the school's community of stakeholders in identifying the mission, beliefs, profile of graduates, objectives for growth and improvement in student performance, and action plans to achieve the objectives. Stakeholders are also involved in overseeing implementation of action plans and monitoring achievement of the objectives.

When a school selects the *Accreditation for Growth* protocol, it must endorse these five commitments. All levels of the organization, including the governing body, the central staff, and the school itself must commit to working together toward the implementation of the growth and improvement plan developed in the *Accreditation for Growth* process.

The Mid-Term Review Report

The very nature of strategic planning and the *Accreditation for Growth* protocol requires that the planning for growth and improvement is *evergreen*—living, dynamic, and on-going. Strategic planning is not a “once and done” proposition. As a result, Middle States has determined that it is important to ensure that a school accredited via *AFG* is committed to the process of planning for continuous growth and improvement as well as to the plan to achieve its growth and improvement objectives.

Therefore, at the mid-point of the school’s term of accreditation, Middle States requires the school to prepare and submit evidence that it is living up to the commitments required by the *Accreditation for Growth* protocol. If the school has been living up to its commitments—faithfully implementing its plan to achieve its student performance objectives and maintaining data resulting from that implementation—completing the report should not be difficult.

Upon receiving the school’s report, it will be reviewed by the Middle States staff. If 1) the report is complete, 2) the report shows evidence the school is meeting the five *AFG* commitments, 3) the report shows evidence of faithful implementation of the school plan for growth and improvement, and 3) there are no monitoring or other issues noted in the Team Report that require an onsite visit, the staff will notify the school that an onsite Mid-Term Review Visit is not required. However, if the school wishes to receive the feedback and input that can be obtained by an onsite reviewer, the school may request a one-day Mid-Term Review Visit.

If the review indicates that 1) the report is not complete, and/or 2) the report does not show the school is meeting the five *AFG* commitments, 3) the report does not show evidence of faithful implementation of the school plan for growth and improvement, and/or 4) there are monitoring or other issues noted in the Team Report that require an onsite visit, the staff will notify the school that an onsite Mid-Term Review Visit is required.

The Mid-Term Review Visit

If an onsite Review Visit is either required or requested, the Reviewer will seek to confirm that the evidence and data provided by the school in the its Mid-Term Review Report. In addition, the Reviewer will provide feedback and support for the school’s efforts in a written report.

In addition to evidence that the school is developing a culture of planning and continuous review, the Mid-Term Reviewer looks for evidence that progress is being made in achieving the goals set in the student performance objectives. As a “critical friend,” the Reviewer also seeks to validate, motivate, and provide assistance to the school by examining the evidence of progress. As the name *Accreditation for Growth* implies, the Reviewer looks for evidence of *growth* in the school’s capacity to plan strategically and to produce the results it has set for itself in its vision and in terms of student performance. In summary, the Mid-Term Review seeks to ensure that planning in the school is a continuous process, not one that occurs once every seven years.

Finally, if appropriate, the Mid-Term Reviewer will look for evidence that any Monitoring Issues noted on the school’s Official Notification of Accreditation have been addressed and resolved satisfactorily.

The Mid-Term Reviewer will submit a report of the visit by adding observations, comments, and conclusions to the school’s Mid-Term Review Report and submit the report to the Middle States Association. After reviewing the Report, the Middle States staff will provide a copy of the report to the school.