

**CHRISTIAN BROTHERS ACADEMY
SYRACUSE, N.Y.**

**SYNOPSIS OF MIDDLE STATES VISITING TEAM REPORT
VISIT DATE: NOVEMBER 5-8, 2017
REPORT DATE: MAY, 2018**

On November 5, 2017, a team of educators representing the Middle States Association visited Christian Brothers Academy for a four day period during which the team assessed the school and all of its components for reaccreditation by Middle States. In preparation of this visit, CBA's Planning Committee conducted a year-long planning process, culminating in the production of a Self-Study document covering all aspects of our school. The Planning Committee sought input and comment from all CBA stakeholders and provided a wealth of information about the school and its processes.

In May, 2018, CBA received notice from Middle States granting reaccreditation for the period May, 2018 through May, 2025. As part of the reaccreditation, Middle States submitted a lengthy report covering the areas assessed by the team. The report contains both findings and some recommendations. This synopsis highlights those findings and recommendations. Anyone wishing to read the full report may do so by clicking on the provided link on our website.

The Organization for Growth and Improvement (Planning Team, self-study process)

The Visiting Team noted that CBA displays a strong commitment to the Middle States growth process and that the process is strongly supported by leadership. The planning process is institutionalized and the Planning Team and Internal Coordinator are focused on participation by stakeholders. Also noted is the close alignment of the Middle States process and goals with both the school's Strategic Plan and the Lasallian Mission Assessment.

The Visiting Team recommends that the ongoing planning process be clearly communicated to stakeholders and that more and diverse stakeholders be integrated to the process. The Visiting Team commends CBA for interweaving Middle States, the Strategic Plan and Lasallian Mission Assessment, using the Mission of the school as a lens. The Visiting Team also recommends that the planning and implementation process (referring to implementation of our Objectives) be communicated regularly to stakeholders to allow for increased participation and to keep stakeholders up to date.

Profile of the School

The Visiting Team recognizes the strong traditions celebrated by CBA. These traditions are supported by a strong alumni base. The leadership and Board of Trustees has a realistic view of growth and challenges and the Lasallian Mission is kept alive and strong in the school.

Student Performance

The Visiting Team observed student scores are commendable, that there is excellent preparation for college, and that teachers are readily available to assist students.

Foundational Documents:

Mission: The Visiting Team found that the Mission Statement is clearly visible throughout the school and that all stakeholders are aware of the Mission.

Beliefs: Although the Belief Statement is not posted, there is student recognition that students can “be who they are and still be accepted”. Stakeholders stress the importance of a quality education, community, and service to others.

Profile of Graduates: The Profile is not posted in publications, but stakeholders know and support the concepts regarding what CBA graduates should be.

Organizational Capacity for Accreditation (the twelve Standards for accreditation):

Standard 1: Mission

The Visiting Team noted that all stakeholder groups referred to and are familiar with the mission of the school. “The Mission of CBA is closely linked with the Lasallian Mission and is clearly seen as a responsibility of the stakeholders.”

Standard 2: Governance and Leadership:

The Visiting Team observed that the structure and functions of the Board of Trustees is organized and highly functional. There is clearly a “positive, productive and supportive relationship evident between the Leadership Team and the Board of Trustees”. Members of the Board are noted to have deep connections to CBA demonstrate dedication to the school’s mission and vision.

The Team recommends continuation of the President/Principal model. It also recommends improving communication of professional development opportunities for teachers as well as soliciting input from teachers in this area.

Standard 3: School Improvement Planning:

Noted strengths in the area included the school’s comprehensive Strategic Plan, the vibrant committee structure of the Board, implementation of a recent feasibility study, and a strong Advancement Team to support those plans.

The Team recommends generally that the school continue to monitor the Strategic Plan for effective implementation. The Team also commends and supports the efforts of the Planning Team and Action Plan Teams to meet on a regular basis in order to effectuate the Objectives.

Standard 4: Finances:

The Team found that through the combined efforts of a strong Finance Committee of the Board of Trustees, strong Finance and Advancement offices, CBA appropriately focuses on finance and its importance, with detailed policies on what the school can afford in financial aid and improvements. Evidence of a healthy financial state is indicated. CBA has exceeded the Finance Standard with its

detailed budget and financial aid process. The Team recommends that CBA continue on the excellent path it has taken with finances.

Standard 5: Facilities:

The Team noticed the cleanliness of the facility. Facilities are well-maintained and respected by students. Continuous improvement is made to the facilities. The music and art rooms, counseling center, health office and science classrooms were especially praised by the Team. Also noted was the rigorous plan for facility improvements.

The Team made note of a lack of auditorium space and that proposals for a full auditorium may be cost-prohibitive.

The Team was particularly impressed with the science labs, particularly the ventilated storage, and with the greenhouse. The Team recommends the school attach a timeline to the Facilities Plan.

Standard 6: School Organization:

While the Team noted many positives about CBA, it found that the school excelled as evidenced by the many comments by students about dedicated and caring teachers, the pervasive nature of the Lasallian vision and Mission at every level, cooperation and caring between staff and faculty, a high level of morale in all stakeholders. Overall, it found the school to be organized, structured, and a safe environment.

The Team recommends a more defined program of professional and support staff development and more structured evaluation of faculty performance.

Standard 7: Health and Safety:

The Team made observations noting safe and orderly procedures for traffic flow inside and outside the school, a thoroughly developed Crisis Plan and drill procedures, attention to student health evidenced by hand sanitizers, a well-equipped nurses' office, and safety procedures in labs.

The Team also noted comments regarding testing the school drinking water quality and suggested tests be made to address any possible concerns.

Standard 8: Educational Program:

The Team noted that the educational program flows from the Lasallian Mission and that students of differing learning styles are supported by faculty, Counseling Center and staff. The Team found that students and other stakeholders are very appreciative of the availability of teachers before and after school to provide assistance. The Team noted the effectiveness of OnCampus, Naviance and online courses as aids to student learning.

The Team particularly praised CBA for its preparation of students for college-level work and the overall excellence of CBA students when compared to students nation-wide.

The Team recommends that CBA continue to balance the college-preparatory focus with "the imperative to develop the whole student", including the areas of the arts and life-skills.

Standard 9: Assessment of Student Learning:

The Team noted that regular and systematic assessment of student progress is made and reported. Stakeholders are highly satisfied with results and students demonstrate high results on Advanced Placement exams. There are regular department meetings and many extra-curricular activities focusing

on academic enrichment. Of particular note is student enthusiasm for academic opportunities and the integration of technology with student assessment.

The Team recommends that policies and guidelines concerning assessments be formalized and written. The Team also suggested better coordination of test dates to avoid student overload.

Standard 10: Student Services:

This Standard focuses on student counseling, admissions and food services. The Team found that the Counseling Center has a comprehensive plan to address student needs, and that all stakeholders expressed great satisfaction with counselors, their availability and the services provided. The Team also noted the success of the Admissions Office in attracting qualified students.

The Team recommends that CBA work with American Food and Vending to evaluate nutritional quality of food offerings, post nutritional values, and add additional healthy alternatives. The Team also recommended continuing to evaluate traffic flow outside the school.

Standard 11: Student Life and Student Activities:

The Team made many observations within this Standard noting the wide variety of activities including sports teams, activities that support students in their academic goals and extra-curricular activities based on student interest and within the school's vision and Mission. Also noted was the process in place to develop new clubs and the tremendous support of faculty for various clubs and activities.

The Team found that the school exceeded the Standard, noting vibrant student life and that students and parents alike "...truly LOVE Christian Brothers Academy...citing over and over this is home." Parents cited "...it "Really does take a village to raise a child – and this (CBA) is truly a beautiful village".

The Team recommends that funding for activities be communicated to stakeholders and that CBA consider accommodation finding adequate Fine Arts performance space. The Team also suggested that the school continue to monitor current social trends to ensure activities are addressed according to the vision and Mission of the school.

Standard 12: Information Resources:

The Team found that technology planning is multifaceted and addressed according to the Mission. The Technology Committee is proactive and there are ongoing refresh plans to address changing technology. Classrooms have presentation options and investment has been made in Chromebook carts for classroom use. Additionally, there is a "recognition of and good balance between availability, security and confidentiality".

The Team found that the school exceeded the Standard acknowledging that parents felt the school exceeded expectations and that the school is proactive in evaluating the use of technology in classrooms.

The Team recommends that additional Chromebook carts be added and that the administration consider adding Professional Development in the area of academic use of technology. It also suggests that CBA consider pursuing funding to support additional technology resources to address speed concerns.