

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



ACHIEVING EXCELLENCE SYSTEM WIDE

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

Excel Education System
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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*¹, 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.”²

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.”³

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,

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

2 Collins, p. 205

3 Collins, p. 208

and work habits should be the priorities for learning? What attitudes, qualities or characteristics should our students demonstrate?

#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"> ● A Profile of the School System that describes the system's current organization and staff. ● 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 ● 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.
4	A Profile of Organizational Capacity that describes the school system's capacity to

Number	Requirement
	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.
5	Identified priorities for growth and improvement in student performance and the system's capacity to achieve the levels of student performance desired and expected.
6	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

Introduction

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.

A. 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

Internal coordinators provided timely access to all materials needed by MSA site visitors. Internal coordinators consisted of key stakeholders and were present during the majority of day one of site visit to address questions. Presentation was coherent and thorough.

Recommendations

For the stake holders to continue using “data from stakeholder surveys” to guide organizational and program improvements.

The Planning Team⁴

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

⁴ 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.

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.

Observations

The planning team included all of the members from internal coordinators with an addition of two more members. This allowed the planning team to be cohesive.

Recommendations

Diversifying the planning team to include additional members from academic division.

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

Leadership has a clear vision outlined in their long-term strategic planning. Leadership informed stakeholders of accreditation process and sought feedback from them.

Recommendations

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

CEO expressed his desire to continue being an ethical company. He spoke at length about his personal experience about almost dropping out of school then almost out of college, and how he feels strongly about helping people obtain their high school diploma at the least.

Recommendations

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

Recommendations

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

Recommendations

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.

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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 VISITING TEAM'S OBSERVATIONS—MISSION

The school system's Mission is:

At Excel Education Systems, we have a mission to be the world's most respected provider of accredited, distance learning products and services by the year 2030.

The LSP's Mission has been developed over time through stakeholder discussions, conversations, and surveys. Leadership then took the feedback that was gathered and synthesized the Vision, Core Values, Purpose, and Mission for the organization.
 The Mission appears to have been created for EES's first accreditation in 2012.
 The Mission is reinforced by the school's actions as attested by parent and student interviews.
 The Mission is widely disseminated. For example, on the school's website.

Do the component schools have individual Missions?

	YES
X	NO

If yes, explain how they align with the system.

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

As participants in creating the Mission, stakeholders know, understand, and support the system's Mission.

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:

- **Integrity**
 We strive to operate our schools with honesty, transparency, and high ethical standards. We keep our promises and honor our commitments.
- **Innovation**
 To best serve our students, we strive for continuous improvement of our teaching and learning processes and our business performance.
- **Collaboration**
 To ensure we are using best practices in all areas of operation, we recognize the need for decisive, professional collaboration; both with our students and their families as well as among EES staff.
- **Accountability**
 We commit to being accountable in serving the best interests of our students and their families. We also honor the accountability to each other as professionals, trusting that our colleagues will hold themselves to the mission and purpose of the organization.
- **Optimism**
 We commit to being an optimistic organization that brings a positive outlook for the future to our workplace. We expect great achievements and success from our students, as well as our Team Members. We hold high expectations and reward accomplishments.

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	

Criterion	Meets the Criterion	Does Not Meet the Criterion
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	

All stakeholders were able to give feedback when reaffirming the Core Values, Purpose, and Vision. Core Values appear to have been created for EES's first accreditation in 2012. Core Values are reinforced by the school's actions as attested by parent and student interviews. Core Values are widely disseminated. For example, on the school's website.

Do the component schools have individual Core Beliefs?

	YES
X	NO

If yes, explain how they align with the system.

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

As participants in creating the Core Values, stakeholders know, understand, and support the system's Mission.

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:

The educational program at Excel High School and Northgate Academy is first and foremost based on the Minnesota Graduation Standards. All courses in both schools have been aligned to these Graduation Standards using Curriculum Trak software and the EES 10-Step Course Design Process.

Once Excel High School (EHS) and Northgate Academy (NGA) students have completed the aligned courses and earned the requisite number of credits, they are awarded the high school diploma, at which time students do a variety of different things with their diploma. Some students go to a four-year university, some attend a two-year community college, other students use their diploma for entrance into the military, and others use it to apply for employment.

When EHS and NGA students graduate from our educational program, they are proud, confident, and excited for the next phase of their educational or occupational journey. EES leadership regularly analyzes graduation surveys and end of course surveys to ensure that our mission is being translated into our programs and services and that our graduates are satisfied with their education and the opportunities it opens for them.

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	

Criterion	Meets the Criterion	Does Not Meet the Criterion
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	

Developed and Reviewed by internal research and discussions with staff and leadership.
 Most recent revision seems to date from Fall 2021
 It is published on their website, for example, <https://www.excelhighschool.com/>

Do the component schools have individual Profiles of Graduates?

	YES
X	NO

If yes, explain how they align with the system.

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

As affirmed by parent and student interviews, the profile is understood.

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

THE VISITING TEAM’S RECOMMENDATIONS:

In this section, the Team lists any recommendations to the school 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.

None

THE VISITING TEAM’S RECOMMENDED MONITORING ISSUES:

In this section, the Team lists any requirements for the Mission, Beliefs, and/or Profile of Graduates that require monitoring. Monitoring issues refer to elements of Mission, Beliefs, and Profile of Graduates required by the protocol that are not completely absent but are met only partially and are either in need of completion or improvement. Monitoring issues must be corrected by mid-term in the school system’s accreditation.

Requirement of the Protocol	Action Recommended
None	

THE VISITING TEAM'S RECOMMENDED STIPULATIONS:

In this section, the Team lists requirements for the foundational documents (Mission, Beliefs, and Profile of Graduates) that are entirely absent and, therefore, the school 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 helps 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 organization's leadership is passionate about their mission and the work of the school. Perhaps most appreciated is their understanding of the significance of providing well for their employees. Various examples were given of ways in which staff needs were provided for, including a significant raise when inflation/gas prices recently increased. It was strongly stressed that any and all needs of teachers are met to support their work. The organization's leadership voiced being willing to provide whatever resources are necessary to accomplish stated goals.

Parents had nothing but positive things to say about their school. They appreciated the flexibility offered, the reasonable pricing structure, efforts on the part of the school to build community, even though classes are asynchronous. If there were any limitation spoken of, it would have been about the building of community among students. One parent explicitly stated she would like to know what other Excel/Northgate families lived nearby, but she also understood that confidentiality made it difficult for the school to provide such access.

Teachers were entirely positive. They were impressive, in fact. They gave every indication that they are competent educators, and some seemed to be exceptional in their speech and descriptions of the work they do with students. Teachers spoke very highly of the administration, as well as of their students and parents. Teachers were adamant in their expressions of commitment to student success. There are some schools - perhaps many - where teachers seem to simply plod along in their work. Not so with Excel's teachers. They seemed passionately committed to their students, their subjects, and expressed their high degree of satisfaction with being part of the Excel organization throughout our conversations.

Students were also quite enjoyable - an affable line-up of adolescent learners. They are international in scope, were candid about their interests and their motivation (or periodic lack thereof) to learn, and their appreciation for the school. Striking was their affinity for asynchronous learning. They expressed they prefer asynchronous to synchronous learning because of the flexibility it affords them. They seemed to greatly appreciate the autonomy it provides.

"Continuous improvement" sounds to be a well-embedded phrase in the culture of Excel and its people. These words were heard multiple times throughout the course of the visit. It is also noteworthy that there was remarkable consistency among reports from admin, teachers, staff, parents, and students - even business partners. In no way did reports seem fabricated or disingenuous; rather, they were seeming highly authentic and reflective of the school's culture and climate.

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.

Stay the course, Excel.

RESULTS OF THE EXTERNAL SCAN (OPTIONAL)

A typical part of a full-fledged strategic planning process is a thorough exploration of the external factors that the school system will likely face in the future. The external scan can assist the System Planning Team and those responsible for implementation of the school system’s improvement plan by answering the following questions:

- What are the external educational, social, political, economic, and technological factors that may affect the system or its component schools?
- How will these factors affect the system’s ability to achieve its student performance and organizational capacity objectives?
- What actions have been built into the action plans to account for the factors?

The System Planning Team and those charged with developing and implementing the action plans to achieve the student performance and organizational capacity objectives took into consideration the results of the external scan when developing the action plans.

EXTERNAL FACTOR	IMPACT ON THE SCHOOL SYSTEM	RESPONSES OF THE SCHOOL SYSTEM
Development of additional online courses	Continuous need to upgrade or add online courses	the company has designed an effective course concept model that will ensure student success and will work for a global student population.
Stigma of online education	Fewer students would apply for virtual learning	The company gained corporate systems accreditation and is recognized by the State DOE.
Economic decline	Fewer students will be able to afford private pay tuition options.	Selling more services and products (B2B) to other schools and businesses.
Search engines play an important role in online advertising. The search algorithms frequently change.	Search engines can cause online businesses to lose first-page rankings, and subsequently lose business.	School and college partnerships will help to limit the potential loss of new students.

EXTERNAL FACTOR	IMPACT ON THE SCHOOL SYSTEM	RESPONSES OF THE SCHOOL SYSTEM
Changing Industry trends / Large competitors like K12 and Connections Academy that desire to enter the private pay market.	The decrease in market share and customer base.	EES will monitor changes in GED, HiSet, TACS, publicly funded online adult programs, etc.

THE VISITING TEAM’S OBSERVATIONS

Observations

In this section, the Team lists any general observations regarding the results of the External Scan and how the school system and component schools have utilized the results.

Observations for the School System

Excel Education Systems offers accredited digital learning products and services for credit recovery, summer school, homeschool supplements, high school diplomas, post-secondary career school programs, and online tutoring.

Observations for the Component Schools

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

A. OBSERVATIONS

In this section, the Visiting Team 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

Excel follows the Minnesota state standards/indicators of learning progress; courses are “mapped” to MN graduation standards using Curriculum Trak software.

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE ON STATE ASSESSMENTS—The Component Schools

Statistical analysis is telling of student performance. Analytics on various points helpful to teachers and administration to gauge student success. The school’s courses/programs are clearly aligned with Minnesota Standards.

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE ON STATE ASSESSMENTS—Component Schools with Performance that differ significantly from the Average for Schools at the Same Grade Levels and the System as a Whole

Statistical analysis within the school's LMS is telling of student performance.

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE ON SCHOOL SYSTEM ASSESSMENTS—The School System

The school/organization is well organized. LMS (Canvas) provides terrific information pertaining to student performance and affords teachers’ ability to help students who need “customized” attention in light of their learning progress or struggles. Data appears to be routinely monitored as an ongoing part of teachers’ responsibilities.

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE ON SCHOOL SYSTEM ASSESSMENTS—The Component Schools

Student performance is monitored on an ongoing basis as it should be by teachers. Administration is apprised of student performance through the learning management system.

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE ON SCHOOL SYSTEMS ASSESSMENTS—Component Schools with Performance That Differs from the Average for Schools at the Same Grade Levels and the System as a Whole

Analytics on various points are kept and are helpful to teachers and administration to gauge student success.

RETENTION IN GRADE—The School System

Excel considers themselves to be a provider both for those who seek to be with Excel long-term, even to graduation, as well as for those who need Excel simply for an interim period of time. They therefore do not consider it imperative that retention by grade level be any particular percentage. That said, 80+% of those who are full-time go on to graduation, and they seek to have higher and higher percentages of students successfully complete their studies in this manner, according to their records of graduation percentages in recent years.

RETENTION IN GRADE—Component Schools with Performance That Differs from the Average for Schools at the Same Grade Levels and the System as a Whole

Excel is an educational provider to both part-time and full-time students. They therefore do not consider it a priority that retention be a particular percentage. 80+% of those who are full-time graduate from Excel’s schools, and they seek to have higher and higher percentages of students successfully complete their studies in this manner.

GRADUATION RATE—The School System

Graduation rates are clearly stated and the school has a defined goal to improve graduation rates by 1% annually.

GRADUATION RATE—Component Schools with Performance That Differs from the Average for Schools at the Same Grade Levels and the System as a Whole

Graduation rates are clearly stated and the school has a defined goal to improve graduation rates by 1% annually.

CITIZENSHIP PERFORMANCE—The School System

N/A

CITIZENSHIP PERFORMANCE —Component Schools with Performance that Differs from the Average for Schools at the Same Grade Levels and the System as a Whole

N/A

B. 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

Teachers are intimately involved in tracking student performance and build “professional” relationships with students to be involved in their success.
Success coaches are also tuned in to students and their performance.

Recommendations for the Component Schools

Evaluation of student performance in a systematic manner (e.g., knowing how many students are

failing at any given moment in time, per the LMS's data) would be a data point worth knowing and tracking - even establishing goals...which, would serve/support other objectives, such as graduation rates.

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

Foundational Standards

The LSP's statement of Mission communicated widely, understood and supported by the students, their families, and (if appropriate) the LSP's community of stakeholders. The organization's leadership voiced being

willing to provide whatever resources are necessary to accomplish stated goals. The mission is Clearly aligned with the LSP's beliefs and profile of the graduate.

Governance and Leadership

The LSP's governing body ensures that the LSP is provided with the sufficient qualified personnel to deliver its programs, services, and activities. It works cooperatively with the LSP's leadership to establish and maintain clear, written policies and procedures that are consistent with the LSP's mission, are implemented at all times, and reviewed regularly.

Because the system is completely online, LSP is readily able to systematically evaluate its own effectiveness through at any given time.

The LSP maintains appropriate and constructive relations with the LSP's leadership, staff, students, families, the community, and with each other in the interest of serving the needs of the students.

The LSP's leadership includes personnel with the appropriate qualifications, experience, and competencies to lead an institution that uses a distance modality(ies) to deliver all or part of its educational program and/or services.

Growth and Improvement

The governing body and leadership ensure that the LSP monitors implementation of its strategic plan and revises it as needed to ensure it is producing the intended results. Teachers mentioned that updates and improvements to courses are always happening. EES listens to student and staff feedback to improve the student's ability to access and understand the curriculum.

Finance:

The governing body and leadership ensure that the LSP develops short and long range financial plans to ensure financial resources are available to deliver its educational program and services. It is evident from the prices listed on the website that Excel has an equitable tuition rate and refund policies.

Facilities:

The governing body and leadership ensure that the LSP is in compliance with the requirements of all appropriate civil authorities in which the LSP is located. They promote a sense of collegiality, high expectations for performance, trust, support, recognition for accomplishments and contributions, and pride in their LSP.

System Climate and Organization

The governing body and leadership ensure that the LSP's organization defines clearly in writing roles, responsibilities, expectations, and reporting relationships of its staff that support a high-quality educational program and experiences for the LSP's students. Members of the faculty who deliver the educational program and associated tasks via a distance modality are appropriately qualified and experienced.

Operational Standards

Health and Safety

The Company takes every reasonable precaution to ensure that employees have a safe working environment. Safety measures and rules are in place for the protection of all employees and the Operations Leadership regularly remind employees of what to do, and whom to contact in case of emergencies.

Educational Program

Parents and students share the same thought about ESS that the educational program includes Experiences that promote students' critical thinking, reasoning, problem-solving skills, study skills, and the transfer of learning to other curricular areas and real-life issues.

Assessment and Evidence of Student Learning

ESS has leadership and a staff that are committed to, participate, and share in accountability for student learning and performance.

Student Services

ESS Actively encourages students to start, continue, and finish their programs of study within the time prescribed and they have passionate success coaches whose task it is to actively monitor student grades and reach out to the students to try to help them increase their success rates.

Student Life and Student Activities

1-Staff, parents and students have pride in ESS.

2-EES schools do try to create a sense of community by reaching out to students for check-ins, instructors providing personalized, nurturing feedback

Information Resources and Technology

ESS information resources are adequate to deliver the educational program by the distance modality and ensures that students have access to the information resources required to achieve the learning goals set for their programs of study.

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 MEETS this Standard for Accreditation.
	It is the Visiting Team's assessment is that the school system DOES NOT MEET 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	

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 mission statements of the organization are clear and well stated. From the president to the administration to the faculty and staff, Excel’s people are able to articulate their commitment to educational excellence and alignment with their mission.

Observations for the Component Schools

The mission statements of the organization are clearly articulated. From the president to the administration to the faculty and staff, Excel’s people are able to articulate their commitment to educational excellence. They are complementary in spirit and consistent to the degree that one would know that the component schools share leadership and a consistent operational model.

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

Recommendations for the Component Schools

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
x	NONE	

No.	Requirement of the Standard or Indicator	Recommended Action

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
x	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 MEETS this Standard for Accreditation.
	It is the Visiting Team's assessment is that the school system DOES NOT MEET 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	
Chart of lines of authority/responsibilities	X
Policies related to governance and leadership	X
<i>For independent, non-public, and proprietary institutions only</i>	
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

ESS is provided with sufficient qualified personnel to deliver its programs, services, and activities, and evaluates staff regularly to ensure effectiveness in performing its duties. Being a virtual school affords them the ability to employ qualified staff from across the country.

Observations for the Component Schools

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

To continue using internal and external data to guide their decisions in providing an excellent value for the money to students and families.

Recommendations for the Component Schools

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
X	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
X	NONE	

SCHOOL SYSTEM IMPROVEMENT PLANNING 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 MEETS this Standard for Accreditation.
	It is the Visiting Team's assessment is that the school system DOES NOT MEET 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	
Strategic and/or long-range plan	x
Development/institutional advancement plan	
Enrollment plan	
Policies related to school system improvement planning	

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 “activities,” as stated in the Strategic Business Plan seem focused and clearly stated. The team estimates they are clearly achievable.

Observations for the Component Schools

None

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 “activities,” as described in the Strategic Business Plan, are already being carried out by the system, and expansion of those activities (AKA “Action Plans”) seem entirely reachable.

Recommendations for the Component Schools

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
x	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
x	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 MEETS this Standard for Accreditation.
	It is the Visiting Team's assessment is that the school system DOES NOT MEET 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	none
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 system is solvent. It pays debts typically in 5 days via BillPay. Excel's Chief Financial Officer was brought on in 2020 as the system expanded. Excel has an annual review by an outside accountant.

Observations for the Component Schools

none

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

Recommendations for the Component Schools

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 MEETS this Standard for Accreditation.
	It is the Visiting Team's assessment is that the school system DOES NOT MEET 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	
Long-range facilities plan	X
Maintenance/repair schedules	X
Plans for any facilities improvements	
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

The system's physical facility is an office for staff and f-t instructors. No students are involved. From the video, the facility is beautiful and comfortable.

Observations for the Component Schools

DNA

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

Recommendations for the Component Schools

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 MEETS this Standard for Accreditation.
	It is the Visiting Team's assessment is that the school system DOES NOT MEET 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	
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	NA
Instruments used for evaluating the performance of the staff	X
Professional development plan	
Policies related to school system climate and organization	

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

Observations for the Component Schools

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

Recommendations for the Component Schools

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	

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 MEETS this Standard for Accreditation.
	It is the Visiting Team's assessment is that the school system DOES NOT MEET 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	
Record of emergency drills	
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

Due to the school being entirely virtual, building based health standards do not apply for students; however, the facility houses its locally based staff in a limited capacity.

Observations for the Component Schools

During the zoom call, the conference room was visible and was able to comfortably seat the school staff members.

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

Recommendations for the Component Schools

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 SYSTEM'S ADHERENCE TO THIS STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION

x	It is the Visiting Team's assessment is that the school system MEETS this Standard for Accreditation.
	It is the Visiting Team's assessment is that the school system DOES NOT MEET 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
Program of studies or other overview of the components of the educational program	x
Policies related to educational program	x
Written curriculum guides for each component of the educational program	x
Master schedule	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 school's leadership and employees spoke routinely of their pursuit of excellence in their educational programming. "Continuous improvement" was a theme in their narratives and documentation.

A school's curriculum is only as good as its teachers' abilities in fostering learning while using that curriculum. The teaching staff of EES – those with whom we interacted during this accreditation visit – are seeming exceptional in their competence and commitment to student learning. The curricula used by the school are carefully selected and leveraged well by instructional staff, and the administration has established programs in full support of student learning and outcomes. Student performance is routinely assessed by teachers as evidenced in interviews and in examination of the school's LMS and supporting documentation. Teachers are evaluated at least twice annually. Hiring decisions are reported to be carefully discerned and teachers are selected among many applicants (a benefit of being an online learning institution).

Observations for the Component Schools

The curricula used by the school are carefully selected and leveraged well by instructional staff, and the administration has established programs in full support of student learning and outcomes. Student performance is routinely assessed by teachers as evidenced in interviews and in examination of the school's LMS and supporting documentation. Teachers are evaluated at least twice annually. Hiring decisions are reported to be carefully discerned and teachers are selected among many applicants (a benefit of being an online learning institution). Component schools/organizational entities are significantly consistent among components.

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

Recommendations for the Component Schools

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
x	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
x	NONE	

ASSESSMENT AND EVIDENCE OF STUDENT LEARNING STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION

The Standard: The school system 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 system community.

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 MEETS this Standard for Accreditation.
	It is the Visiting Team's assessment is that the school system DOES NOT MEET 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
Example of student transcript	x
Example student report card	x
Reports of the results of assessments administered to students	x
Policies related to assessment of student learning	x

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 school meets the criteria for this standard, having provided written evidence, narrative (oral) evidence from various sources (such as administration and teaching staff), and documented evidence such as what is seen in the learning management system.

Excel has made it a priority to create “authentic” learning assessments like written projects, projects in other formats leveraging technology, student presentations, and other constructive ways for students to demonstrate learning.

Observations for the Component Schools

The school clearly meets criteria for this standard, having provided written evidence, narrative (oral) evidence, and documented evidence such as that found in the learning management system. The component schools are entirely consistent with one another, with insignificant variations such as curricular preferences.

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

Recommendations for the Component Schools

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
x	NONE	

No.	Requirement of the Standard or Indicator	Recommended Action

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
x	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 MEETS this Standard for Accreditation.
	It is the Visiting Team's assessment is that the school system DOES NOT MEET 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	
Results of follow-up studies of graduates	
Policies related to student services, including guidance and counseling, admissions, transportation, food services, and special education	x
Admissions criteria (if applicable)	

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

EES does employ licensed counselors and other staff whose task it is to actively monitor student grades and reach out to the students to try to help them increase their success rates.

Observations for the Component Schools

None

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

Recommendations for the Component Schools

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
x	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
x	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 MEETS this Standard for Accreditation.
	It is the Visiting Team's assessment is that the school system DOES NOT MEET 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	
Samples of student publications—e.g., yearbook, student newspaper, literary magazine	
Budget for all athletic activities	
Budget for all non-athletic activities	
Policies on academic eligibility	
Policies related to student life and student activities	
<i>For boarding school systems</i>	
Descriptions of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Programs to develop healthy relationships with adults ● Plans for continuous and responsible supervision by responsible adults 	
Descriptions of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provisions for student privacy ● Recreational programs ● Provisions for religious practice 	

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 school clearly meets criteria for this standard, having provided written evidence, narrative (oral) evidence from various stakeholders (such as administration, parents, students), and documented evidence, but the students expressed that their accomplishments and contributions are not clearly recognized by the LSP.

Observations for the Component Schools

None

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 LSP needs a clearer recognition of student accomplishments, contributions, and responsibilities.

Recommendations for the Component Schools

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
x	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
x	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 SYSTEM'S ADHERENCE TO THIS STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION

x	It is the Visiting Team's assessment is that the school system MEETS this Standard for Accreditation.
	It is the Visiting Team's assessment is that the school system DOES NOT MEET 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	
The information resources and technology plan(s)	
Budget for information resources and technology	
Information skills curriculum	
Inventory of information resources	
Inventory of information technology equipment	
Policies related to information resources and technology	

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 school clearly meets criteria for this standard, having provided written evidence, narrative (oral) evidence from various stakeholders (such as administration, parents, students), and documented evidence.

Observations for the Component Schools

None

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

Recommendations for the Component Schools

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
x	NONE	

No.	Requirement of the Standard or Indicator	Recommended Action

Recommended Stipulations:

In this section, the Team lists any requirement(s) of this Standard and/or its Indicators of Quality that 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
x	NONE	

THE PLAN FOR GROWTH AND IMPROVEMENT

Introduction

The purpose of the self-study and accreditation process is first and foremost to establish whether the school 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.

A.1. School System Objectives/Goals

Objective Goal No.	Statement of Objective/Goal	Focus	
		Student Performance	Organizational Capacity
Objective/Goal #1	<p>Academic Goal</p> <p>It is the goal of Excel Education Systems to improve its Graduation Rate by 1% over the previous year. This percentage is found by dividing the total number of graduates for a calendar year by the total number of FTE 12th grade students. Each EES school reports this data to the governing authority, where it is aggregated. The last four years of Excel High School Graduation Rates: 2016: 73% 2017: 76% 2018: 75% 2019: 76% 2020: 77% 2021: 79%</p>	X	
Objective/Goal #2	<p>Customer Service Goal</p> <p>As with all organizations, customer service is paramount. At Excel Education Systems, graduation surveys at each school are used to calculate the percentage of students/customers who felt that the school staff was friendly and helpful. Currently, graduates from EES schools, who responded to the survey, show that 80% of the graduates felt that</p>	X	

Objective Goal No.	Statement of Objective/Goal	Focus	
		Student Performance	Organizational Capacity
	school staff was friendly and helpful all of the time, and 12% responded sometimes friendly and helpful. The goal is 100% perfect customer service rating. The company is working goal is to improve the percentage of graduates who feel the school staff was friendly and helpful all of the time to 90% by the end of 2021.		
Objective/Goal #3	Full-Time Enrollment Goal Excel Education Systems has a goal of increasing the overall enrollment of full-time students (FTE) in its schools by 10%+ per year over the next three years.		X
Objective/Goal #4	Financial Goal Excel Education Systems has a financial goal of increasing its overall system revenue by 10% per year over the next three years. Excel Education Systems believes that if student success is at the forefront of the organization, this financial goal takes care of itself. If EES continues to improve its graduation rate, customer service levels, professional development practices, and enrollment numbers, reaching the financial goal will also be possible.		X

Are at least two of the objectives/goals focused on growing and improving student performance?

X	Yes
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	No
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What evidence did the Team see and hear that would confirm that these objectives/goals represent the highest priorities for growth and improvement in student performance and organizational capacity in the school system?

The Strategic Business Plan, an accompaniment to the Self Study, provides these activities for each goal.

#1
Activities to help reach this goal:
Diligent daily checking of student progress and follow-ups when necessary
Responsiveness to student inquiries
Curriculum reviews, revisions, and resource enhancements
Professional Development
Enhanced Success Coach Program Online tutoring engagement –Train the Brain

#2
Professional Development
Call Coaching

#3
School 2022 2023 2024
EHS 4070 4447 5000
NGA 150 160 200
WTI 100 200 300
TOTAL *4320 *4807 *5500
Activities to help reach this goal:
Continued Marketing
Additional Course Offerings

24
Call Coaching
Partnerships/State Programs
WTI, ACE, dual college enrollment

#4
Activities to help reach this goal:
Marketing
Professional Development
Partnerships
Curriculum Enhancements and Improvements
Staff Additions – Please see section 6.4 Personnel Plan

What level of understanding of and support for these objectives/goals did the Team see and hear among the school system’s community of stakeholders?

Among the full-time administrative staff, support was clearly expressed, indeed, more like to say the

results of these goals were expected.

Among parents, students, and teachers, this kind of question wasn't directly asked. Although it was apparent that teachers and support staff clearly expected increased enrollment and increased support for that enrollment.

The finance goal #4 did not come up beyond the ownership.

To what degree are the objectives/goals clearly stated and sharply focused on the intended outcomes and target improvements in student performance and organizational capacity?

<i>Technical Criteria for Student Performance Objectives/Goals</i>
<i>Is the objective/goal:</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>● Closely associated with the exit outcomes for students as expressed in the Profile of Graduates, graduation requirements, and/or performance expectations for the school system's students?</i><i>● Reflective of the school system's mission, and supportive of the system's strategic plan?</i>
<i>Does the objective/goal:</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>● Include baseline data for each assessment used to measure achievement of the objective/goal, and are the data organized logically and presented in an easily understood format?</i><i>● Enjoy the support of the school system's stakeholders as one of the highest priorities for growth and improvement in student performance?</i>
<i>Does the school system:</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>● Have sufficient energy and resources to support the implementation of the action plans and the achievement of the objectives?</i><i>● Have an effective and efficient way to gather data to assess progress toward achieving the objective/goal?</i>

<i>Technical Criteria for Organizational Capacity Objectives/Goals</i>
<i>Is the objective/goal stated as a desired end result in organizational capacity? (What does the school system have to do better or differently in its programs, services, activities, and/or operations to produce the levels of student performance desired?)</i>
<i>Does the objective/goal address one or more areas addressed by the Middle States Standards for Accreditation that have been identified through the Self-Assessment of Adherence to the Standards to be in need of growth and/or improvement in order for the school system to be able to achieve the desired levels of student performance?</i>
<i>Has the school identified the assessments it will use to measure progress toward achieving the objective/goal, i.e.:</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>● Have measures been identified to determine achievement of the objective?</i><i>● Are baseline data included for each measure? (MSA requires that at least one measure has baseline data in place by the time the team arrives.)</i><i>● Is a baseline year in which the data sets for each assessment were collected included?</i><i>● Are challenging and appropriate seven-year performance targets set for each assessment used to measure achievement of the objective?</i><i>● Has the school identified multiple forms of assessment to measure accomplishment of this objective when appropriate and available?</i>

Technical Criteria for Organizational Capacity Objectives/Goals

- *Are disaggregated data included when appropriate?*

Is the objective measured by both external and internal assessments when appropriate and available?

The goals, as stated, do not include numbers but percentages. The team has not seen disaggregated data. In part, that absence may be due to proprietary information not released by a for-profit organization.

But, as far as the team can determine, the objectives/goals are clearly stated and sharply focused on the intended outcomes and target improvements in student performance and organizational capacity.

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?

The Team's determination is that the objectives/goals are:				
Reasonable	X	Yes		No
Achievable	X	Yes		No

A.2. 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

Goal #2 Customer Service Goal, from our observation, is easily achievable. All parents and students reported happy to immediately speak to a human who would help with any issue from enrollment to transcript.

The other goals are enrollment dependent and seem attainable, given a relatively stable environment (and some expansion into overseas markets).

Observations for the Component Schools

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

Continue to do what the system is doing best – hiring good and skilled staff, hiring enthusiastic and expert instructors, and answering the phones with a real human with no voice mail.

B. 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?

Among the full-time administrative staff, support was clearly expressed, indeed, more like to say the results of these goals were expected.
Among parents, students, and teachers, this kind of question wasn’t directly asked. Although it was apparent that teachers and support staff clearly expected increased enrollment and increased support for that enrollment.
The finance goal #4 did not come up beyond the ownership

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?

Does this action plan:

<i>Include strategies and action steps that are comprehensive in scope?</i>
<i>Include a logical sequence of strategies and/or action steps?</i>
<i>Outline clearly and in detail the action steps to be taken in the first two to three years of the plan?</i>
<i>Include enough activities to ensure that the objective will be achieved?</i>
<i>Address as many aspects of the institution's programs, activities, and services as appropriate?</i>
<i>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?</i>
<i>Identify the resources required to implement the action steps?</i>
<i>Identify the persons or groups responsible for implementing each action step?</i>
<i>Vary the groups or individuals responsible so that the burden for implementation does not fall on just one or two individuals?</i>
<i>Include clear indicators of success for each action step so the institution knows what action steps have been implemented and with what result?</i>
<i>Establish reasonable timelines for implementing the action steps?</i>
<i>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?</i>

The "activities," as stated in the Strategic Business Plan seem focused and clearly stated. The team estimates they are clearly achievable.

B.2. 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 "activities," as described in the Strategic Business Plan, are already being carried out by the system, and expansion of those activities (AKA "Action Plans") seem entirely reachable.

Observations for the Component Schools

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

The team has no recommendations beyond Keeping Doing What You’re Doing.

THE VISITING TEAM’S RECOMMENDATIONS—STUDENT PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES AND ACTION PLANS

In this section, the Team lists its recommendations regarding the degree to which the school system’s student performance and organizational capacity objectives, goals and action plans meet the Requirements of the Protocol for Objectives and Action Plans.

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	

Requirement of the Protocol	Action Recommended

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:

ACCREDITATION

An "Accredited" institution is an educational organization that meets all MSA Standards for Accreditation, adheres to applicable MSA policies, and meets the requirements of the self-study protocol used. The institution agrees to adhere to the requirements for maintenance of accreditation, and there are no outstanding issues related to the Standards or requirements of the protocol that would require monitoring or onsite visits beyond the normal expected events required by the protocol utilized.

NEXT STEPS

As [Excel Education 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

Commendations from the Oral Report

- The team would like to commend the school on its dedication to having a high quality teaching staff that is very dedicated.
- I'm happy to say the same of the school's administrative staff and ownership
- Along those same lines, the team would like to commend the school for having a dedication to maintaining the health and welfare of its employees.
- We would like to commend the administration for its level of management of the business end of the school.
- The team would like to commend the school for its high quality IT management and a strong organization of the many, many useful apps.
- Strongly commended by parents and students is the sense that a human answers every call, and we concur.
- Lastly, commendation about the many interesting endeavors the system is undertaking, for example, the library/adult education/high school diploma initiative.

The team sees Excel Education Systems as a robust organization quite capable of growth and improvement. As with any educational organization, the main vulnerability is enrollment, but as we've seen, enrollment continues to grow. Excel's most challenging goal is probably increasing the graduation rate, given the diversity of its student population, but the increment of improving by 1% per year seems achievable, especially with the fairly recent addition of success coaches (who are counselors +).