

**APPLICATION
FOR
CANDIDACY**



COMMISSION ON SECONDARY SCHOOLS

**MIDDLE STATES ASSOCIATION OF
COLLEGES AND SCHOOLS**

August 2002

Guidelines for Submission of the Application for Candidacy

The Head of a school wishing to host a Candidacy Visit with a view to entering the accreditation process for the first time is required to:

- provide various pieces of information to the Commission on Secondary Schools and to the Candidacy Visitor,
- submit, or have ready for viewing at the school, various specified documents, and
- give candid comments on the school's current position with respect to each of the Commission's twelve Standards for Accreditation.

Collection of the required information, documents and comments will help orient the school towards the accreditation process and the standards that must be met. It will also assist the Candidacy Visitor in planning the visit and assessing the readiness of the school for the next stages of the process. Advance preparation will ensure that the Candidacy Visitor receives a comprehensive picture of the school and its current level of development.

Please note the following additional guidelines:

- If a piece of information or documentation is not available at the candidacy stage, please say so. This will not necessarily put the school's candidacy in jeopardy, but it will indicate where work needs to be done in the period leading up to the full team visit.
- Should the school or the Candidacy Visitor indicate that an accreditation standard is not currently met, this will not necessarily be detrimental in the long term, given that later stages of the accreditation process are designed to lead to improvement.
- It is expected that a variety of members of the school community will be involved in the task of preparing materials for the Candidacy Application. For example the Board Chair, members of the administrative team, the Parents' Association President, the business manager, the guidance counselor, the librarian, etc. could all be asked to contribute in their areas of expertise.
- It is not expected that the Candidacy Application will be as comprehensive as the full self-study completed after the school is accepted as a Candidate Member.
- Any additional materials such as school handbooks, pamphlets, policy manuals, etc. should be ready for viewing by the Candidacy Visitor when on site.

Please prepare **two copies of the completed application** and submit both to:

Dr. Susan K. Nicklas, Executive Director
Commission on Secondary Schools
Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools
3624 Market Street
Philadelphia, PA 19104

One copy will serve as Middle States documentation. The second copy will be forwarded by MSA to the Candidacy Visitor approximately one month before the Candidacy Visit.

APPLICATION COVER PAGE

Name of School:	
Date School was Opened:	
Address of School:	
Telephone:	
Fax:	
E-mail:	

Head of School:	
Title:	
Appointment Date:	

If part of a school district/diocese/archdiocese, please complete the following information.

Superintendent of School District:	
Name of School District:	
Address of School District:	
Configuration of the District (# of schools, what levels)	

Signature of Head of School

Date

Signature of Head of District/Diocese

Date

GENERAL SCHOOL INFORMATION

STUDENT ENROLLMENT: *Complete the following chart to show current enrollment.*

Grade Level	Total Enrollment	Males	Females
Grade 5			
Grade 6			
Grade 7			
Grade 8			
Grade 9			
Grade 10			
Grade 11			
Grade 12			
Post-Secondary			
Other			
TOTALS			

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS: *Complete the following charts to show current student demographics. Select the student characteristics most pertinent to your school (e.g. ethnic group, socio-economic background, nationality, special needs populations, day/boarding, etc.)*

-----SAMPLE-----

Student Characteristic:	Percent of Student Body
_____ ETHNICITY _____	
African-American	12%
Asian	3%
Caucasian/White	58%
Hispanic	25%
Native American Indian	2%
TOTAL	100%

Student Characteristic:	Percent of Student Body

TOTAL	100%

Student Characteristic: _____	Percent of Student Body
TOTAL	100%

Student Characteristic: _____	Percent of Student Body
TOTAL	100%

TYPE OF SCHOOL: *In the chart below, check all descriptors that characterize the school.*

Descriptor	Check all that apply
Public	
Non-Public	
Independent	
Charter	
Urban	
Suburban	
Rural	
Proprietary	
Non-profit	
Day	
Residential	
Special Education	

If Non-Public, indicate whether the school has a religious affiliation and if so, which one.

AVERAGE CLASS SIZE: _____

LICENSING INFORMATION: *Please complete the following chart.*

In what state(s)/country(ies) is the school licensed to operate?	
In what state(s)/country(ies) is the school licensed to grant a diploma?	

SUPPORT DOCUMENTATION: *Please attach the following documents. Use existing documents wherever possible.*

Document: Copy of School Profile (if available)

**STANDARD #1 : PHILOSOPHY, MISSION, BELIEFS
AND/OR OBJECTIVES**

The Standard: The institution has clearly written statements of philosophy, mission, beliefs, and/or objectives that convey the general and specific purposes of the educational programs and that express expectations for quality. Stakeholders, including staff, parents, and governing body members, understand, accept, and give input into the development of the organization’s philosophy, mission, beliefs, and/or objectives. These documents are appropriate for the groups served and are reviewed periodically.

SCHOOL COMMENT: *Please comment in the space below the extent to which the school believes it meets the above standard.*

AVAILABILITY OF DOCUMENTS: *Please complete the chart below.*

	Latest Approval Date	Do not have
Philosophy		
Mission		
Beliefs		
Goals/Objectives		

SUPPORT DOCUMENTATION: *Please attach the following documents. Use existing documents wherever possible.*

- Document 1A: A single paragraph describing the process by which the Philosophy, Mission, Beliefs and/or Objectives were formulated, showing the role of various sectors of the school community.
- Document 1B: A copy of the school’s Philosophy, Mission, Beliefs and/or Objectives (NOTE: These documents may go by other names such as vision, values, etc.)
- Document 1C: A short description of the main features of the community served by the school.

STANDARD #2 : GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP

The Standard: The governance and administration work in partnership to ensure the integrity, effectiveness, and reputation of the organization through the establishment of policy and oversight of leadership. There is an atmosphere of mutual respect and purposeful effort on behalf of students and their learning. The administration of the organization provides a productive work environment, timely and open communication, and the leadership necessary to plan both day-to-day operations and the long-term future of the institution. The school is chartered, licensed, or authorized by a state, nation, or authority, which operates in the public interest.

SCHOOL COMMENT: *Please comment in the space below the extent to which the school believes it meets the above standard.*

STRUCTURE OF GOVERNANCE: *Please complete the chart below.*

Does the school have a Governing Body and, if so, what is its official title?	
If the school does not have a Governing Body as such, who establishes overall policy?	
What is the school's legal status (e.g. proprietary, nonprofit corporation, etc.)?	

SUPPORT DOCUMENTATION: *Please attach the following documents. Use existing documents wherever possible.*

- Document 2A: A list of the members of the governing body (or equivalent) showing names and occupations
- Document 2B: A list of governing body/Board committees (if any)
- Document 2C: A description of the process by which governing body/Board members are replaced or renewed

- Document 2D: An organizational chart that shows the governance and administrative structure of the school. The names of the persons responsible in each area should be shown alongside their title.
- Document 2E: A description of the process by which the governing body/Board evaluates the performance of the head of school
- Document 2F: A description of the process by which the governing body/Board evaluates its own performance

Please have available for the Candidacy Visitor to see at the onsite visit.

- Document 2G: Board policy manual
- Document 2H: Public relations materials

STANDARD #3 : ORGANIZATIONAL DESIGN AND STAFF

The Standard: The organizational structure of the institution provides the vehicle for carrying out the established philosophy, mission, beliefs, and/or objectives of the educational program and support services. A clearly defined set of reporting relationships exists and administrative, instructional, and support staff are qualified, competent and sufficient in number to allow the effective delivery of quality education to students. Staff assessment procedures are in place, are clear to all involved, and are collaborative. Ongoing professional development, clearly defined roles and responsibilities, and collegial relationships among staff and administration are evident and conducive to cooperative action.

SCHOOL COMMENT: *Please comment in the space below the extent to which the school believes it meets the above standard.*

STAFFING: *Please complete the chart below.*

ACADEMIC STAFF: State the number of people employed as members of the academic staff (including head of school, other administrators, and all teachers).	
ACADEMIC STAFF: How many “full-time equivalents” is this?	
ACADEMIC SUPPORT STAFF: State the number of people employed to <i>directly</i> support the academic staff (library personnel, teacher assistants, educational psychologists, etc.)	
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE STAFF: State the number of people employed in administrative offices (secretaries, bookkeepers, etc).	
GENERAL SUPPORT STAFF: State the number of people employed in other support roles (kitchen staff, maintenance, transportation, nurse etc.)	

STUDENT TO TEACHER RATIO: *Please complete the chart below.*

Name of Division	Ratio
Middle	
Secondary/Upper	
Whole School Average	

SUPPORT DOCUMENTATION: *Please attach the following documents. Use existing documents wherever possible.*

- Document 3A: A list of benefits offered to personnel (housing, medical insurance, etc.)
- Document 3B: A copy of the teacher appraisal system
- Document 3C: A copy of the staff/professional development plans and/or a description of staff development programming

Please have available for the Candidacy Visitor to see at the onsite visit.

- Document 3D: A copy of the Staff Handbook

STANDARD #4 : EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

The Standard: The educational programs consist of both carefully planned and well executed curriculum programs that include appropriate standards, solid instructional pedagogy, and appropriate assessment based on research and best practices. The educational programs are sufficiently financed, periodically reviewed, and mission-appropriate. They are developed to meet and address the needs of students and are designed to produce student learning at all levels. Effective policies and practices are in place, along with instructional materials, technology, and equipment that are appropriate, functional, and well maintained.

SCHOOL COMMENT: *Please comment in the space below the extent to which the school believes it meets the above standard.*

SUPPORT DOCUMENTATION: *Please attach the following documents. Use existing documents wherever possible.*

- Document 4A: A brief outline of the school’s main curriculum offerings
- Document 4B: A description of the curriculum development process and cycle used for curriculum review
- Document 4C: A brief paragraph on whether and how the students are tracked or grouped.

Please have available for the Candidacy Visitor to see at the onsite visit.

- Document 4D: Any “Program of Studies” booklet or brochure describing curriculum offerings given to parents.
- Document 4E: Sample of master schedule

STANDARD #5 : LEARNING MEDIA SERVICES AND TECHNOLOGY

The Standard: Learning media services and technology function as important tools to enhance classroom instruction and other school activities as grade level appropriate. Well-organized information resources reinforce knowledge, skills, and attitudes learned in other program areas and broaden minds by providing opportunities to conduct research and interact with information.

SCHOOL COMMENT: *Please comment in the space below the extent to which the school believes it meets the above standard.*

STATISTICS ON LEARNING MEDIA AND TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES:
Please complete the following chart.

LIBRARY MEDIA CENTER	
Seating capacity of library media center	
Numbers of books in library media center	
Number of magazine/subscriptions	
Number of multi-media titles	
Number of online database subscriptions	
Number of CD-ROMs	
Number of professional library staff	
Number of library support staff	
TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES	
Total number of operational computers in the school for administrative uses	
Total number of operational computers in the school for student use	
Number of technology staff	

SUPPORT DOCUMENTATION: *Please attach the following documents. Use existing documents wherever possible*

- Document 5A: A copy of the school's technology plan

Please have available for the Candidacy Visitor to see at the onsite visit.

- Document 5B: A copy of library policies on aspects such as selection of items for purchase, reaction to objectionable materials in library, etc.
- Document 5C: A copy of information services and technology usage policies
- Document 5D: A copy of the information skills curriculum for students

STANDARD #6 : STUDENT SERVICES

The Standard: The school provides services to students that optimize their preparation for learning. Chief among these services are health services and, at appropriate levels, guidance including academic and personal counseling. Preventive and emergency health care services are provided and health and safety policies are clear and well understood. Other services that may be provided include transportation, food service, services for special needs students, and admissions and placement.

SCHOOL COMMENT: *Please comment in the space below the extent to which the school believes it meets the above standard.*

STATISTICS ON STUDENT SERVICES STAFFING: *Please complete the following chart.*

Number of school/guidance counselors	
Number of medically trained staff onsite	
Number of food services staff onsite	
Number of transportation services staff onsite	
Number of staff serving students with special needs	
• professional staff	
• support staff	
Number of admissions/placement staff	
Number of other services staff. Areas listed below: • • •	

SUPPORT DOCUMENTATION: *Please attach the following documents. Use existing documents wherever possible.*

- Document 6A: A copy of admissions policies and criteria
- Document 6B: A brief paragraph on each of the following to outline the services provided to students in the following areas:
 - Guidance and counseling (personal, academic, career, college)

- Health
- Food
- Transportation
- Services to students with special needs
- Admission and placement

Please have available for the Candidacy Visitor to see at the onsite visit.

- Document 6C: Copies of policies related to student services such as handling of medical emergencies, dispensing of medicines, seat belt policies, etc.
- Document 6D: Sample transcript
- Document 6E: Results of follow-up studies (colleges/work choices)

STANDARD #7 : STUDENT ACTIVITIES AND STUDENT LIFE

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.

SCHOOL COMMENT: *Please comment in the space below the extent to which the school believes it meets the above standard.*

SUPPORT DOCUMENTATION: *Please attach the following documents. Use existing documents wherever possible.*

- Document 7A: A copy of student “Code of Conduct”
- Document 7B: Please complete a list of clubs, sports, student government, and other activities available to students as follows:

Student Activity	Available to Boys? (yes/no)	Available to Girls? (yes/no)

Please have available for the Candidacy Visitor to see at the onsite visit.

- Document 7C: A copy of the Student handbook

STANDARD #8 : FACILITIES

The Standard: The school facilities, consisting of the site, building(s), and equipment, provide a safe, well-maintained physical environment that supports optimal student development and achievement. The school facilities are appropriate to implement the stated philosophy, mission, beliefs, and/or objectives of the school.

SCHOOL COMMENT: *Please comment in the space below the extent to which the school believes it meets the above standard.*

INFORMATION ON FACILITIES: *Please complete the following chart.*

Is the land upon which the school stands owned or leased by the school?	
Are the school buildings owned or leased by the school?	
Identify any off-campus facilities used for school activities.	

SUPPORT DOCUMENTATION: *Please attach the following documents. Use existing documents wherever possible.*

- Document 8A: A simple floor plan of the school facilities
- Document 8B: A summary of any plans for future changes to the school facilities

STANDARD #9 : FINANCES

The Standard: Financial resources are sufficient to provide the educational opportunities defined in the school’s philosophy, mission, beliefs, and/or objectives. The business practices of the institution promote confidence in the organization’s ability to manage fiscal and material resources in a responsible manner and to follow prescribed budgeting and accounting principles. The majority of resources raised for school purposes must be dedicated to school operations.

SCHOOL COMMENT: *Please comment in the space below the extent to which the school believes it meets the above standard.*

STATISTICS ON FINANCES: *Please complete the following chart.*

Percentage of income obtained from federal tax resources	
Percentage of income obtained from state tax resources	
Percentage of income obtained from local tax resources	
Percentage of income that is obtained from grants	
Percentage of income that is obtained from student tuition and fees	
Percentage of income spent on staff salaries and benefits	
Percentage of income spent on professional development of staff	
Percentage surplus or loss on the operating budget over the last three years	
Amount of any reserve funds	
Amount of school “debt”: mortgages, loans, etc	
Per Pupil Expenditure	

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SUPPORT DOCUMENTATION: *Please attach the following documents. Use existing documents wherever possible.*

- Document 9A: A copy of the current operating budget
- Document 9B: A copy of a most recent certified external audit
- Document 9C: Student tuition and fee schedule (where appropriate)

STANDARD #10 : HEALTH AND SAFETY

The Standard: A safe and healthy environment for teaching and learning is provided. Both preventive and emergency health and safety procedures are clear and well documented. The school environment is productive and orderly.

SCHOOL COMMENT: *Please comment in the space below the extent to which the school believes it meets the above standard.*

INFORMATION ON HEALTH AND SAFETY: *Please complete the following chart.*

Number of security personnel	
Date of last fire safety inspection	
Date of last health/food services inspection	

SUPPORT DOCUMENTATION: *Please attach the following documents. Use existing documents wherever possible.*

- Document 10A: Copy of school emergency and evacuation plans.
- Document 10B: A list of agencies that conduct inspections for compliance with code, health and safety requirements.
- Document 10C: List any areas identified for correction by the most recent insurance, fire, health and safety reviews.

STANDARD #11 : ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING

The Standard: The assessment of student learning outcomes enables students to monitor their own learning progress and allows teachers to adapt their instruction to the specific learning needs of students. The school’s effectiveness is assessed by examining areas such as student learning and performance, program evaluation, performance results for support services, graduate success, and client satisfaction. Results are used to develop strategies for improving service and program quality. Assessment results are communicated appropriately to parents/guardians, students, staff, and school community.

SCHOOL COMMENT: *Please comment in the space below on whether the school believes it meets the above standard.*

INFORMATION ON THE SCHOOL’S ASSESSMENT PROGRAM: *Please complete the following chart.*

GRADE LEVEL	INDICATE THE PRIMARY ASSESSMENTS USED TO ASSESS STUDENT LEARNING AND PERFORMANCE
Grade 5	
Grade 6	
Grade 7	
Grade 8	

Grade 9	
Grade 10	
Grade 11	
Grade 12	

SUPPORT DOCUMENTATION: *Please attach the following documents. Use existing documents wherever possible.*

Document 11A: Policies on the assessment of student learning and performance

Document 11B: A sample report card

Please have available for the Candidacy Visitor to see at the onsite visit.

Document 11C: A summary of external examination/standardized test performance (on SAT, Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, etc.)

STANDARD #12 : PLANNING

The Standard: The school makes use of strategic, long-range, and operational planning to continuously improve its educational programs and services. Improvement plans focus on student performance and organizational growth and engender continuous improvement across all aspects of the school organization. Externally validated processes for evaluation, strategic planning, and school/district improvement are continuously maintained. Systematic analysis regarding student performance and organizational growth is coupled with analyses of instructional and organizational practices to ensure alignment with the school’s philosophy, mission, beliefs, and/or objectives. Trends in outcomes and results are projected and goals of demonstrated strategic merit are identified.

SCHOOL COMMENT: *Please comment in the space below the extent to which the school believes it meets the above standard.*

SUMMARY OF AVAILABLE PLANS: *Please complete the chart below by indicating whether the school has developed the following plans.*

TYPE OF PLAN	YES?	NO?
Strategic plan		
Financial plan		
Facilities plan		
Technology plan		
Staff development plan		
Other:		
Other:		

SUPPORT DOCUMENTATION: *Please attach the following documents. Use existing documents wherever possible.*

- Document 12A: The current strategic plan (or similar document)