

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



# EXCELLENCE BY DESIGN

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

**Monroe Township High School  
Monroe Township NJ**

**DATES OF TEAM VISIT  
March 9 – March 22, 2019**

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<b>Page</b>
Introduction	1
Organization for Growth and Improvement	3
<i>Internal Coordinators</i>	4
<i>The Planning Team</i>	6
<i>Role of the School's Leadership and Governance</i>	7
<i>The Plan for Institutionalizing a Planning Ethic</i>	9
<i>The Plan for Communication and Awareness</i>	11
<i>The Plan for Periodic Reviews</i>	12
Profile of the School	14
Profile of Student Performance	17
The School's Foundation Documents	19
<i>Mission</i>	19
<i>Beliefs</i>	20
<i>Profile of Graduates</i>	22
Profile of Organizational Capacity	25
<i>Mission Standard</i>	26
<i>Governance and Leadership Standard</i>	29
<i>School Improvement Planning Standard</i>	33
<i>Finances Standard</i>	36
<i>Facilities Standard</i>	40
<i>School Organization and Staff Standard</i>	44
<i>Health and Safety Standard</i>	48
<i>Educational Program Standard</i>	51
<i>Assessment and Evidence of Student Learning Standard</i>	55

<i>Student Services Standard</i>	58
<i>Student Life and Student Activities Standard</i>	62
<i>Information Resources Standard</i>	66
Plan for Growth and Improvement	69
<i>Student Performance &amp; Organizational Capacity Objectives and Action Plans</i>	69
Accreditation Recommendation	80
Next Steps	81
Summary and Closure	82
Visiting Team Roster	88

# INTRODUCTION

The Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools is a non-governmental, nonprofit, peer-administered organization of diverse educational institutions committed to ensuring that students in accredited schools are receiving the highest quality education. Additionally, the Association seeks to ensure that accredited schools 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, meeting the requirements for accreditation, exemplary programs, and supportive services. For more than 125 years, the Association has provided leadership in educational quality and school improvement for its member schools in the United States and around the world.

The school that is the subject of this report selected the *Excellence by Design (ExBD)* self-study and accreditation protocol. *ExBD* is an accreditation protocol that uses strategic planning as a vehicle for growth and improvement in student performance and in the school's capacity to effect that growth. The protocol, developed by the Middle States Association Commissions on Elementary and Secondary Schools (MSA-CES), links various planning and school growth and improvement efforts. *Excellence by Design* leads the school to establish objectives for improving student performance and organizational capacity based on its vision of a preferred future for its students. Therefore, *Excellence by Design* 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 *Excellence by Design* is to provide a framework and process to guide the school's efforts to achieve excellence in student performance and to achieve accreditation by the Middle States Association.

*Excellence by Design* also provides the framework for formally aligning all the work of the school to ensure that all of its efforts are coordinated and focused on achieving the school's mission. It is expected that this framework will accomplish the following purposes:

- Development of a sense of community and common purpose among the school's students and staff, and its community of stakeholders.
- A Plan for Growth and Improvement in student performance and the school's capacity to produce the levels of student performance expected by the school and its community of stakeholders.
- Greater cooperation between all of the school'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 levels of student performance.

Most importantly, this framework intends to develop in the school community of stakeholders an understanding that the school is part of a larger community of learners and that this community has agreed upon, supports, and accepts responsibility for assisting the school in achieving its Mission, 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 *Excellence by Design* protocol, the school first must meet the 12 Middle States Association Standards for Accreditation. Second, the school, through a planning team of

representatives from the school's community of stakeholders, must identify areas of student performance that are the highest priorities for growth and improvement, measurable performance objectives, and a plan for achieving the objectives. The plan must also include the school's mission and the beliefs or core values that guide its decision making.

The Middle States Visiting Team is a group of professional educators appointed by the Middle States Association to visit the school. The purpose of the Team's visit is threefold. First, the Team determines whether the school meets the 12 Standards for Accreditation. Second, the Team determines if the school meets the requirements for a planning ethic and planning processes of the *Excellence by Design* protocol. Third, the Team reviews the content of the school'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's community of stakeholders.

#### **NOTE TO THE READERS OF THIS REPORT**

Readers of this report must be aware that the report is written, in part, as the Team's response to the school's self-study. Therefore, if readers need to see the specific information and data to which this Report responds, they should read the applicable section(s) of the Self-Study Document.

## ORGANIZATION FOR GROWTH AND IMPROVEMENT

A sound planning ethic and planning process are every bit as critical to achieving a school's goals for growth in student performance and the school's 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 have the capacity, the will, and the systematic structures required to implement its plan and achieve its goals?" A fine plan full of great activities is only as strong as the ability and willingness of the school 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 *Excellence by Design* protocol, it must commit to working toward establishing and maintaining a planning ethic within the school. A planning ethic means that planning for growth and improvement becomes part of what the school and its stakeholders do as much as providing programs, teaching, resources, services, and activities. A planning ethic requires continuous clarification of the school'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 is action-oriented by developing long-term strategic action plans that integrate programs, services, facilities, and support to address the school's growth needs.

In the *Excellence by Design* protocol, the school also makes a commitment to continuous growth and improvement. The school 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 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 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 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 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 its report, the Visiting Team provides observations and recommendations regarding the school's Organization for Growth and Improvement based on what was seen and heard during the Team's visit to the school.

## Leadership for Growth and Improvement

The primary role of the leadership and governing body of the school—those in positions of authority and influence within the school—in the school 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 the a major goal of the self-study and accreditation process is to ensure that the school 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 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 larger organizations of which the school may be a part. 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 its parent organization. They, too, must “champion the cause.”

It is also important for the head of the school 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, the mission and plan must be developed through a grass roots level—bottom up, rather than top down.

### A. 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’s planning process and development of a plan for growth in student performance.
- Oversee planning and preparation for the Visiting Team.
- Prepare for the Mid-Term report.
- Provide the energy, enthusiasm, and expertise to move the process forward.

#### **The Visiting Team observed that:**

- “If we were a football team, Danielle would be the quarterback.” This quote is from a Planning Team member describing the Monroe Township High School Internal Coordinator Ms. Danielle Drust. Danielle was more than the “point lady” in the Self Study; she was the only Internal Coordinator, a committee of one. Ms. Drust is a science department coordinator and teacher of

science. It was an administrative decision that the Internal Coordinator would be a department coordinator and a liaison between staff, administration, parents and students. Danielle was chosen “based on her leadership, technical skills, professional reputation and dedication to the district.”

- In addition to her stellar academic and experience credentials, the Internal Coordinator possessed that “human touch” in her interactions with the Visiting Team.
- The Internal Coordinator fulfilled her role by providing energy, enthusiasm, and expertise to maintain a continual cohesion among faculty, staff, students, parents, and administration regarding the efficient completion of the Middle States Accreditation protocols. The Team experienced a timely schedule so that site objectives were easily met.
- The Internal Coordinator attended various workshops provided by Middle States. Released and professional development time was given to allow for work on the Self Study. Danielle was permitted to serve on two site team visits enabling a practical understanding of the day to day operation of an evaluation.
- Communication ahead of the visit with the Visiting Team regarding logistics was prompt, clear, concise and helpful. A Team member noted, “The Internal Coordinator did an excellent job of completing the Self Study with ample time before the visit so that there was an abundance of time to review and assimilate the document.”
- The Coordinator led the Self Study and the reporting process by establishing an appropriate number of committees, delegating authority and involving the entire Monroe cadre of stakeholders. The Team unanimously agreed that all voices were heard in reaching consensus on middle States issues.
- The Coordinator actively used technology to gather, sort, and present data involved in the preparation process.
- The *Excellence by Design* protocol demands that an Internal Coordinator infuse the planning effort with the 3E’s: energy, enthusiasm and expertise. The Visiting Team unanimously grades the efforts of Internal Coordinator Danielle Drust an E as in Excellent!

### **The Visiting Team recommends:**

- In future planning, there must be more than one Internal Coordinator to insure the proper direction of the entire planning effort. Monroe was blessed to have Danielle as the Coordinator but the responsibilities placed on her were, in the words of a Team member, “overwhelming and taxing with responsibilities.” In addition to at least one or two more in-school coordinators, consider an “external coordinator,” a retired staffer or administrative assistant who would handle the planning logistics such as the hotel reservations, transportation, Team meals, and travel reimbursement.
- As previously mentioned, the Monroe Internal Coordinator did yeoman service coordinating the Self Study and preparing the site visit. Action Plans for a new accreditation cover a seven year timeline. Leadership will change – it is the nature of the beast. Therefore, consider personnel planning for the long haul. This may include the addition of new persons to work as interns of the current Coordinator on the required Mid-Point Review visit or a specific and written plan for future Internal Coordinators. The Team suggests that consideration be given to classroom teachers in future Internal Coordinator selections.



## B. The Planning Team

spectrum of the school's stakeholders in the process of continually defining a preferred vision, in developing the means to get closer to that vision, and in 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 the vision for the school 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.
- Oversee development of the action plans to achieve the performance objectives
- Monitor implementation of the action plans.
- Conduct a periodic review of the progress being made to achieving the objectives.

The protocol requires that the Planning Team includes a varied spectrum of the school's community of stakeholders. Because Middle States' member institutions are so varied in type and situation, Middle States does not prescribe what groups constitute a school's stakeholders. This is a local decision. However, the school's leadership and the Planning Team will be expected to provide a rationale for the composition of the Planning Team.

Because the school 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 and the work of the school. In most cases, this will require a concerted effort and the opening to examination of how the institution thinks about institutional growth and improvement and who is responsible to lead it.

### **The Visiting Team observed that:**

- After running a Self Study with one Internal Coordinator, Monroe Township High School moved back into the good graces of the Visiting Team with a 25 member Planning Team! The planners included a broad spectrum of personnel: 10 teachers, 7 department coordinators, a vice principal, district security advisor, school nurse, building manager, parents (also district teachers), and students who attended meetings as necessary. The teacher leadership came from varied academic disciplines.
- Authority was given to utilize contractual teacher prep time as well as departmental meetings to perform Middle States functions. The Planning Team determined Goals as well as Action Plans with the full authority of the administrative team.
- The Planning Team was extremely familiar with the culture of the school and the Monroe Mission Statement as reflected in this Team statement: "The representation of the Planning Team reflected a dynamic culture at the high school and effectively brought together many different stakeholders. We found all planners engaged, invested and enthusiastic."
- Teacher members of the Planning Team stated, "As a teacher, it was nice to see and hear other teacher concerns and then work as a team to solve problems" as well as "the process allowed us

to address data driven problems.”

- Many of the Planning Team are advisors for clubs, sports teams, AVID teachers, STEM Academy teachers, representing key parts of the educational program and district-wide goals.
- The Visiting Team was happy to see that the composition of the Planning Team was not “administrative heavy” thereby avoiding the trap of “top down” planning.
- Documents were shared through Google Docs to allow all members to contribute. All voices were given the opportunity to be heard and “eventually consensus was reached.” A planner told us, “The heart of this group is a sense of professionalism and our dedication to do what is right for all stakeholders in the Monroe Township community.”
- Elements of the Planning Team will meet monthly to update and evaluate progress on Action Planning. The entire group will meet at least two times a year.
- The Action Planning will continue primarily through the use of administrative prep periods. Documentation of all work will be shared via Google Drive folders.
- The Visiting Team gives the Monroe Township Planning Team and Internal Coordinator Danielle Drust a strong vote of confidence. We believe the high school has the will and capacity to achieve the reasonable goals found in the Self Study. Our Team feels there is an obvious culture of growth and improvement in the school and it goes beyond Middle States. Monroe High School does not accept status quo situations.

#### **The Visiting Team recommends:**

- The Visiting Team suggests one more step in an otherwise comprehensive plan as to how the Planning Team will function after the site visit and during the implementation of the Plan for Growth and Improvement: it is imperative to keep the Superintendent of Schools and the Governing Body up-to-date on the Middle States Objectives. The Planning Team should request one public meeting with the full School Board at the end of every school year to discuss progress (or the lack of it) on the Performance Objectives. Our Team believes the presentation will be a positive one and since the meeting is open to the public community shareholders will share in the information.
- The Internal Coordinator and the Planning Team must oversee revisions and adaptations of the Action Plans (if necessary) over the length of the new protocol. The school plans are not written in stone. Data may demand change. If changes are made the Internal Coordinator and the Planning Team will be “the point” with this activity.
- Parts of the Planning Team should continue to meet monthly or as needed to discuss progress on the Action Plans or discuss new challenges in meeting goals.
- Use the administrative prep periods to the fullest in this endeavor.

### **C. Role of the School’s Leadership and Governance**

It is a school's formal leaders—those in positions of authority and influence within the school—who should serve as the primary “champions” for the planning process and the Plan for Growth and Improvement. Strategic planning experts have long held that champions are extremely important to the success of planning. Because a goal of the self-study and accreditation process is to develop a vision and

a plan to achieve it that is accepted and supported by the entire community of the school, the school's leaders and governing body must communicate clearly and often that this process is important for the future of the school and its students, and that they will provide the leadership, resources, and support needed to make the process and the plan successful.

**The Visiting Team observed that:**

- The Monroe Leadership and Governance Team exhibited a clear understanding and desire that the school would “learn and grow” from the Middle States evaluation process.
- Consensus among all stakeholders is that the current Leadership is a “dynamic force that achieves success for the betterment of the school community.”
- In regards to the Administration, one stakeholder stated, “I could not do what I do without the support of my administration.”
- The Administration provided the Planning Team with data pertaining to student achievement in assessing overall student performance and planning for future improvement.
- Administrative liaisons served on the Planning Team to ensure open communication. There was an obvious deep concern for the well-being of the students and staff.
- The Administrative Team adeptly utilized technology to maintain communication with the Internal Coordinator and Planning Team.
- Leadership approved an appropriate use of school professional time to prepare for the site visit. Line staff unanimously verified the latter statement.
- Monroe Leadership provided the high school with adequate financial support to fund the Self Study and the Visiting Team visit.
- The Board of Education and Superintendent approved and supported all actions taken by the Planning Team which they monitored through feedback reports provided by the Internal Coordinator. In addition, the district allowed access to data from other processes such as NJQSAC that planners felt to be valuable information in the development of the Self Study and the Performance Objectives.
- The Leadership and Administration actively models an approachable atmosphere for the Planning Team to promote achievement and growth with the Academic and Organizational Objectives. A planner was heard saying, “We have a supportive administrative team.”
- In particular, the Visiting Team salutes the Superintendent of Schools for his vigorous support of the Middle States planning ethic and his dedication to the students and all stakeholders in the community. Carry on!

**The Visiting Team recommends:**

- As the Governing Body (School Board and Superintendent) of the Monroe School District, it is within the Leadership’s power to change the direction of Middle States planning, foundation documents such as Mission/Philosophy, Belief Statements, and the vision for the future. However, the Visiting Team firmly believes that Monroe Township High School is headed in the right direction and the next seven years will bring an even higher level of quality education to your students. While change is a constant, approach what the Team believes is a rosy Monroe High future with tinkering and not hammering.

- As the school moves through the seven year cycle of the new protocol, increase stakeholder involvement in particular with students, parents, community members and the business community.

#### D. The Plan for Institutionalizing a Planning Ethic

A sound planning ethic is critical to achieving the school's mission, its objectives for growth and improvement in student performance and organizational capacity, and to its capacity to effect the intended growth. An effective planning ethic addresses the essential question: "Does the school 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 and its stakeholders to implement it.

While successful planning is reflective of the school's context and culture, it should be visionary in describing what the school 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 seeks accreditation using the *Excellence by Design* protocol, it must commit to working toward establishing and sustaining a planning ethic within the school. A planning ethic means that planning for growth and improvement becomes part of what the school and its community of stakeholders do as much as teaching, 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. 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's growth objectives.

In the *Excellence by Design* protocol, the school also makes a commitment to continuous growth and improvement. The school 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 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 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 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 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 also has the effect of sharing among the stakeholders responsibility for the success of any planning for growth and improvement. *Excellence by Design* builds such roles and responsibilities into the self-study and planning processes. Therefore, if implemented faithfully, *Excellence by Design* can provide the school 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 one person (the head of the school) but with all of the school's stakeholders.

#### **The Visiting Team observed that:**

- At the first full night of Team discussions, 3 basic questions were posed by the Team Chair: will the Monroe Township performance and planning ethic reach implementation, does it aim high (Is it visionary?), and is it now or will it become part of the standard operating procedure for the school? By mid-morning of the next day, it was obvious that the answers were all yes. The Planning Team and the Internal Coordinator have developed a plan to monitor progress made in the implementation of the Student Performance and Organizational Capacity Objectives. As part of an annual review process, the Planning Team and the administrative prep committees will address the collection and analysis of relevant data, the reporting of results to and solicitation of feedback from internal and external stakeholders, and (where needed) updating and changes in the Action Plans.
- Teaching faculty and building administration were heavily included in the development of the Action Plans and the latter personnel will be used to collect, analyze, and use the data to determine the efficiency of Action Plans.
- Concerning staff turn-over, each year staff will be updated about Middle States progress. Volunteers will be asked if they would like to be part of the Planning Team. When new staff is hired, they will be provided information about Middle States Goals and the Action Plans.
- Parents new to the district and students will be asked to join the planning efforts. Community involvement will be increased as will school efforts to work with business and industry leaders in the Monroe Township area.
- Celebrating successes will be done through community nights, school board presentations, award ceremonies and the use of the public access TV channel. Recognition will include students as well as faculty and staff.

#### **The Visiting Team recommends:**

- Make special efforts to reward Monroe Township High School faculty for their exemplary planning work on the Self Study. Give consideration to released time, permission to attend seminars/conferences, and approval for innovative programs/ideas/teaching. Teachers are the "grunts and ground pounders" in this business. Let's face it – if the planning reaches the Action Plan goals it is mainly because of the teacher cadre.
- In addition to a yearly evaluation of progress on the goals by the Planning Team, a progress report should be delivered to the Governing Body at the end of the academic year. Action should be taken

revising any parts of the plan that are not working and need revisions or rewriting.

## E. The Plan for Communication and Awareness

An important factor in increasing the likelihood that a school 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 and its stakeholder community. This is accomplished by ensuring broad based knowledge and understanding of and support for the school's performance objectives and the plans to achieve them.

Therefore, an important element of the planning process is communicating with the school's staff, students, governing board, and other stakeholders to ensure they are aware of the requirements of the *Excellence by Design* protocol, the school'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'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 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'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.

### **The Visiting Team observed that:**

- Monroe impressed the Visiting Team with a myriad of communication planning to reach a "critical mass" with the community of stakeholders. Planned implementation includes the utilization of the Falcon Flier Newsletter, regularly updating the Middle States tab on the school's website so community members have a consistent location where pertinent information can be found, maintaining an active presence on social media, and holding various community outreach events such as "informative teaching nights" at which parents and community members will come to the high school to interact with faculty.
- A yearly update will be given to the Governing Body.
- The school will enact the "all-call phone and email system" to make the Monroe community aware of actions needed for the betterment of the school and any relevant progress indicators.
- There will be a regular administration of the parent/student/staff surveys on a 3 year cyclical basis as the school moves toward completion of Action Plans.
- Team interviews with classroom teachers showed that the "front line staff" believe they have "a voice and an ear" in the Plan for Growth and Improvement. The teachers should be encouraged to spread the "good news" throughout the Monroe community.

### **The Visiting Team recommends:**

- Continue working toward the goals of the Plan for Growth and Improvement but always be ready to implement new strategies and directions to get and keep the message of the protocols in the heads of the staff and the community. If data from the plan dictates a shift in direction for some objectives, make the changes public and be sure explanations are given to all stakeholders. Rely on the local print/media market and technology to get the word out.
- Pay attention to all stakeholders but in particular to students (It is their school!) and their parents (They pay the bills!). With those stakeholders on your side, you have reached what Middle States calls a “critical mass” of support from the community.
- Throughout the entire protocol Monroe must utilize “the usual suspects” in communicating the Plan for Growth to the community of stakeholders: the school website, social media, administrative prep time, in-services, print/TV media, Open House activities, school board meetings, technology and face to face meetings with stakeholders. Talk it up!

## F. The Plan for Periodic Reviews of the Plan for Growth and Improvement

In order to institutionalize a planning ethic, continuous growth and improvement in student and organizational performance must become a way of life within the school. It must be an ongoing, dynamic, and “evergreen” process. It is expected and required that the Plan for Growth and Improvement that is developed and presented for accreditation will be implemented faithfully over the length of the accreditation term.

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 *Excellence by Design* protocol includes the requirement that the school conducts formal reviews of the action plans and the progress being made toward achieving the performance objectives and that reviews are conducted periodically but, as a minimum, at least once annually.

### **The Visiting Team observed that:**

- The Planning Team will meet monthly to update Action Plans and monitor planning implementation. Smaller committees will meet during administrative prep periods and will inform the main committee of work progress.
- Annually, a report will be made to district stakeholders of progress toward goals, unexpected setbacks, and revisions as necessary.
- At the beginning of each school year, an agenda for the year will be set by the Planning Team to determine overall goals and what “action steps” must be acted upon.
- Financial and time constraints will be discussed with the administration if they occur.
- Surveys will be given out at the 3 year point to all stakeholders. At that time, the Planning Team will review survey results, revise and re-plan if necessary.

- The Internal Coordinator and the Planning Team will be responsible for ensuring that the assessments for each objective are properly administered and the data and information obtained from each assessment are collected, analyzed, and reported.
- The Visiting Team unanimously believes that the Monroe Plan for Periodic Review is “institutionalized.” It will be SOP (Standard Operating Procedure) in the daily life of Monroe High School.

**The Visiting Team recommends:**

- In addition to a formal annual review of planning progress, the Visiting Team strongly recommends that a yearly presentation by the Planning Committee and the Internal Coordinator be given at a public meeting of the Monroe Township School Board.

## THE VISITING TEAM’S RECOMMENDED MONITORING ISSUES

### Recommended Monitoring Issues

**In this section, the Team lists any aspects of the school's organization and processes for implementing its Plan 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’s accreditation.**

Requirement of the Protocol	Recommended Action
NONE	



## THE PROFILE OF THE SCHOOL

The Profile of the School describes the school and the context in which the school exists and does its work. It presents a portrait of the school’s community(ies) and the “distinctive personality” and the unique characteristics of the school. The Profile presents contextual information that establishes a “developmental snapshot” of where the school is in its efforts to achieve its Mission and to ensure the highest levels of student performance.

The Profile of the School includes information and data that describe the school and the context in which the school exists. The Profile also helps the school and its community of stakeholders understand the school’s Mission, and describes the opportunities for and challenges to the school as it seeks to achieve its Mission. The Profile includes descriptions of the:

- Community, its schools, and its traditions;
- History of the school;
- Social and economic characteristics of the community, its constituencies, and its schools;
- Climate for teaching and learning in the school;
- Number and qualifications of the professional and support staffs; and
- Number and characteristics of the student population

The data and information contained in the Profile of the School are not evaluated by the Visiting Team. Instead, the Profile serves two purposes:

- To ensure that the members of the Planning Team have a common knowledge base about the history and current status of the school in those areas on which the accreditation of the school will focus; and
- To “introduce” members of the Visiting Team to the school, and as such, the Profile provides one of the lenses through which Team members will view and evaluate the school. Thus, the Profile section should provide sufficient information about the school and its students’ performance to build and enhance Team members’ awareness and understanding of the total milieu in which the school exists and operates.

Readers of this report are advised to read it in conjunction with the Self-Study Document prepared by the school. The Self-Study Document provides the information and data the Visiting Team uses as the starting point for its evaluation of the school. Therefore, not all of the details included in the Self-Study Document are repeated in the Team's report.

<b>Head of School</b>	Scott Madreperla
<b>Internal Coordinator(s)</b>	Danielle Drust
<b>Number of Students</b>	2330
<b>Grade Levels Evaluated</b>	9-12
<b>Additional Locations/ Branch Campuses</b>	None

## THE VISITING TEAM'S OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS – PROFILE OF THE SCHOOL

### Observations

**In this section, the Visiting Team shares any general observations and/or areas of strength regarding the school's Profile of the School and how the Profile defines the school and its priorities for improving student performance.**

- Located in Middlesex Township, New Jersey, and named for President James Monroe, Monroe Township was founded in 1838. It was an agrarian community through the 1960's. The township became suburban after the New Jersey Turnpike Commission opened Exit 8A in 1968 in the western part of Monroe Township. The latter brought changing demographics and the lore and legend of Bruce Springsteen music.
- The 2010 Census listed the population as 39,132. Per Wikipedia, as of 2017 the population was 44,314. Jamesburg is a borough in the township with a population of 5,915. It sends its high school population to Monroe High School as part of a sending/receiving relationship.
- Monroe Township has experienced tremendous growth due the construction of numerous new housing developments. Over the past 20 years, the high school population has grown from 850 students to 2400 students. All indicators predict this growth will continue in the future. The current high school facility was constructed in 2011.
- As Monroe Township increases in population, it is becoming more culturally diverse. Current racial make-up is approximately 82% White, 4% Black, 13% Asian, 4% Hispanic or Latino, and 0.08 Native American. The township has experienced a rapid growth in the Indian American population with an estimated 4,200 Indian American residents as of 2015 per the ACS Demographic Housing estimates.
- There are an estimated 16,497 households in the community and 22.4% have children under the age of 18 in residence.
- 34% of the households are non-families and 25.5% have someone living alone who is age 65 or higher. Median household income is approximately \$74,000.
- The school's original building, designed to serve 1,100 students, was opened in 1974. The New Jersey Board of Education voted to close Jamesburg High School in 1979 due to small enrollment (182 students). Jamesburg then sent its students to Monroe Township High School.
- The Marasco Center for the Performing Arts was added to the building in the 1990s. More classrooms were added in the early 2000s. Because of increased student population, a new high school was built and opened for the 2011 – 2012 school term. The previous high school is now used as the Monroe Township Middle School.
- Per Self Study data, the high school is currently served by 11 administrators, 139 classroom teachers, 38 special needs teachers, 7 guidance counselors, 10 specialists and consultants, 5 technology personnel, 2 library staff, and 3 health service personnel. Support staff includes 22 paraprofessionals, 11 secretarial staff, 23 custodial personnel, and 7 security personnel. Food service is outsourced. The professional staff is listed as "well-qualified."
- During the last five years, Monroe Township has experienced a tremendous amount of growth and influx of students. Many new housing developments have taken the place of farms that were worked since the birth of this country. A recent building referendum on the expansion of the high

school was defeated. A burden has been placed on the school district to manage the additional population of students.

- The Monroe Township High School also faces the challenges of a growing English Language Learner population. It is also drawing families of students with special needs to the community due to the outstanding special education programs which includes the UNIFIED classes as well as UNIFIED extracurricular club activities.

## Recommendations

**In this section, the Visiting Team lists any recommendations how the school can capitalize on or respond to the Profile of the School 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 is not required to accept or act on them.**

- The Visiting Team met with a myriad of stakeholders at Monroe Township High School who spoke eloquently on the need to address the growing student population. When the expansion of the school is revisited (and perhaps, revised) in the wake of the failed referendum, we recommend consultation with a school space planner to study and maximize ways to use the school's available space.
- In an effort to get the older population in the community "on board" to support future school expansion measures, increase efforts in creating a closer bond between Monroe Township High School students and the local retirement communities. These efforts might include some form of community outreach, be it social or through volunteerism. Use the students for "the human touch."
- Since the improvement of SAT scores and career readiness are two Performance Goals of the Self Study, it is suggested that Monroe vigorously address the needs of the growing English Language Learner population.
- As Monroe Township High School continues to grow, the addition of staff must be taken under serious consideration during each budget cycle.
- Slowly but surely, the demographics of the high school is changing. Research has shown that the staffs of highly successful schools tend toward demographic where the staff reflects the makeup of the student body.

## PROFILE OF STUDENT PERFORMANCE

The Profile of Student Performance includes the following information and data that describe the levels of student performance on assessments that are most respected by the members of the school's community of stakeholders, valued by the school's professional staff, and/or required by the state or federal governments. The Profile includes:

- Data for standardized academic assessments.
- Data for school-based academic assessments.
- Data for achievement indicators such as graduation rate, college rigorous courses, college acceptance, etc.
- Data for citizenship measures such as attendance, promptness, discipline, etc.
- Data for state academic assessments, if applicable.

Collecting and tracking data that describe how well the school's students are performing in the areas that are normally used by the school's community of stakeholders to determine if the school is accomplishing its mission is important for the following reasons:

- The school needs these data to determine if it is making progress toward achieving its mission;
- The school needs these data to determine if its graduates are meeting the expectations expressed in the school's Profile of Graduates;
- The school needs these data to help it determine in which areas of student performance there are the largest gaps between what is expected and how student are performing and, therefore, what the focus of the school's Plan for Growth and Improvement should be.

### THE VISITING TEAM'S OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS – PROFILE OF STUDENT PERFORMANCE

#### Observations

**In this section, the Visiting Team shares any general observations and/or areas of strength regarding the school's Profile of Student Performance and how the profile defines the school and its priorities for improving student performance.**

- Graduates of Monroe Township High School are reaching achievement levels through applications of appropriate academic and technical knowledge. They build connections and value interactions with others as responsible and responsive citizens. Monroe graduates are able to utilize technology to foster the development of 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills that are necessary to be productive citizens in an ever-changing world. Lastly, Monroe High School graduates understanding that learning is a dynamic, life-long process.
- Monroe PARCC scores are either at the state average or exceeding the state average.
- 70.5% of the students passed the MAP testing. Over 50% of the White, Black, and Hispanic students passed the test. 40% of students with IEP's were successful and 57.3% of socio-economically disadvantaged passed the test.

- 424 seniors took the SAT with an average score of 586 EWR and 597 Math.
- 161 juniors and seniors took the ACT with a combined average of 24.6.
- 85% of the 376 who took the AP testing scored a 3 or higher.
- PSAT math mean score was 540 and EWR score was 536 for junior class members. Sophomores earned a math mean score of 506 and EWR of 502.
- Benchmark evaluations were satisfactory in all math courses, biology, chemistry, physics, Spanish, French, Italian and Latin.
- 50% of the students earned honor roll status.
- 93% of the last graduation class intended to continue their education at a 4 year college or a 2 year college or technical school.
- Graduation rate for the Class of 2018 was 97.5%.
- In summary, Monroe Township High School students are performing well on assessments that are respected by community stakeholders, the professional staff, and the requirements set by state and federal governments.

## Recommendations

**In this section, the Visiting Team lists any recommendations how the school can capitalize on or respond to the Profile of 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 is not required to accept or act on them.**

- While student performance at Monroe is strong and laudable, continue to focus on all students and their myriad of learning abilities. During the Team visit we observed a College Fair that included representatives from dozens of educational entities including traditional four-year colleges/universities, community colleges, technical schools and the military. It is important to realize that while the vast majority of students will matriculate at a traditional college or start at a community college, trade and technical schools (many of the latter grant a legitimate four-year Bachelor's Degree) are becoming more popular as an older generation retires and a younger generation seeks employment opportunities of the future.
- Because Monroe places great emphasis on technology and 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning, it is important that yearly budgets keep up with the high ticket price of technology curricula and the growing enrollment of the high school. While the Visiting Team applauds technology in the school, in particular the 1:1 initiative, there must be enough money to cover an influx in population and the need to consistently upgrade technology.

## THE SCHOOL'S FOUNDATION DOCUMENTS: 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's Mission, Beliefs, and Profile of Graduates. These foundational documents answer the following questions:

- *What is our vision for a better future for the children of our school?*
- *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's Mission should reflect the deepest desires of the school's community of stakeholders for what they want the school to become—its future in terms of what it will do for its students. The mission expresses what the adults in the school community commit themselves to doing for the benefit of the students.

A mission statement should describe in broad and visionary terms what the school is striving to become. A mission should be outcome-based, providing clarity regarding the school'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 achieve its purposes).

It is not appropriate for a Visiting Team to determine whether the school's Mission is the right or wrong mission for the school 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. The Team will also try to ascertain whether the school's community of stakeholders support the Mission and are "walking the talk." It is then for the school to decide if the Team's comments are legitimate and relevant. It is in this spirit that the following observations on the school's mission.

#### **The school's Mission is:**

Monroe Township High School will provide an educational program that fosters cognitive and personal growth of all members in its evolving educational community. The program will focus on providing all students an equal opportunity to acquire knowledge, skills and strategies needed to become productive, responsible citizens who make a positive contribution to 21<sup>st</sup> century society.

#### **What is the aim or purpose of the school as stated in the Mission?**

To foster cognitive and personal growth for everyone, especially in the light of the changing times of 21<sup>st</sup> century society.

**What is the means the school will use to accomplish its Mission?**

- A focus on technology in the classroom (Schoology, iPads. etc.)
- A caring and supportive atmosphere
- An administration which actively listens to stakeholders
- Passionate and dedicated teachers and staff
- A rigorous academic environment which includes various unique programs (STEM, AVID, UNIFIED, Project Lead the Way, Falcon Care etc.)

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

- The teaching faculty seem aware of the Mission through the effort to update this document for the Middle States Self Study which involved all of the staff
- Many stakeholders were largely unaware of the Mission though their support of its principles is clear. The school is advised to publicize the Mission more. It should be noted that the current Mission Statement was only approved by the Board of Education in February 2019 which has not allowed for much time to publicize it.

**B. BELIEFS**

Statements of belief serve as the foundation of a strong strategic plan. They are the formal expression of a school's fundamental values and serve as its ethical code. Beliefs describe the moral character of a school. In a planning process involving diverse stakeholder groups, they represent the composite of the personal values held by individual planning team members.

Because beliefs are a matter of faith, not a matter of fact, they express the school's overriding convictions, its inviolate commitments. They outline what members of the school's community of stakeholders are willing to "go to the mat" defending. Because beliefs identify the "line in the sand," they can be used as a lens through which to examine the worthiness of the school's potential decisions or future actions.

Only members of the school community can identify their deeply held beliefs. A Visiting Team can, however, offer an objective perspective on what is unclear or seems inconsistent or incomplete in the school's Beliefs. Ultimately, however, it is the school 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's Beliefs are made.

**The school's Beliefs are:**

- The education of students is our primary responsibility and is cooperatively shared by students,

educators, parents and the community.

- Every student has a right to a quality education and equal access to appropriate learning opportunities.
- Learning is a dynamic, life-long process.
- Education must be relevant and responsive to an ever-changing world.
- Co-curricular activities are an integral part of the education community.
- Students are worth the investment in educational excellence.
- All staff and students are entitled to a clean, comfortable, healthy and safe environment.
- Since students learn in different ways, a variety of strategies and materials are needed for learning to be maximized.
- Higher expectations result in better performance.
- Consistent effort, long-term commitment and a positive attitude are essential.
- Creativity and flexibility are elements of the educational process.
- Professional autonomy provides incentive for teacher creativity.
- Education should provide positive role models for students.
- Proactive leadership is a necessary component of a quality education program.
- An educated citizen is essential to the success of a democratic society.

**To what degree do the school's Beliefs meet the criteria of the *Excellence by Design* protocol? If they do not meet the criteria, explain why.**

- The Monroe Township Belief Statement is an extremely well written document which clearly outlines the expectations the school has for each student and themselves. It is clear, specific, comprehensive, practical, and meets the general requirements of a Belief Statement (i.e. it is about deeply felt beliefs which guide the school).

**How well do the school's Beliefs represent what the Team heard from the school's stakeholders?**

- The document represents the particularities of this school. Its emphasis on "equal access" is seen through the emphasis on special education, the emphasis on "a variety of strategies" is seen through the iPad initiative and others, and the emphasis on "proactive leadership" is clearly evident in the well respected building administration. This document both outlines a positive vision which is universal as well as focuses on the particularities of this school district.

**To what extent do the school's stakeholders know, understand, and support the school's Beliefs of core values?**

- Here as well there seems to be little knowledge of the Belief Statements though their support of its principles is clear. As with the Mission, the school is advised to publicize the Beliefs more.
- Teachers seem to be aware of these Beliefs through their efforts to produce this document which involved all of the staff.



## 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, achievement, 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.
- Provide 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's Profile of Graduates is:**

The graduates of Monroe Township High School will:

- Achieve through their applications of appropriate academic and technical knowledge.
- Demonstrate appropriate and productive workplace skills, qualities, and behaviors.
- Build connections and value interactions with others as a responsible and responsive citizen.
- Align knowledge, skills and personal interests with personal interests.
- Develop critical thinking skills and inquiry skills, utilizing them to make informed decisions.
- Utilize technology to foster development of 21<sup>st</sup> century skills that are necessary to be productive citizens in the ever-changing world.
- Make informed decisions about their health and the manner in which to achieve a healthy lifestyle.
- Understanding that learning is a dynamic, life-long process.

**To what degree does the Profile of Graduates express:**

- **What the school expects its graduates to know?**

- **What the school expects its graduates to do with what they know?**
- **What qualities or characteristics the school expects its graduates to demonstrate?**
- The Profile of Graduates expects students to focus on applying knowledge and to live as responsible citizens. It is highly focused on 21<sup>st</sup> century skills which is exemplary.
- The Profile demands excellence in character and personal responsibility in school and with life after graduation. The staff certainly reinforces this sense of personal responsibility.
- The Monroe faculty and administration are clearly producing graduates who embody this Profile despite a general lack of knowledge about this document. It is a testament to the school that, even without it posted in every corner of the school, it is quietly spreading the school culture into student's lives.

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

- The support of the Profiles of Graduates is clear. However, the Team advises the school to better publicize the Profiles of the Graduates more.
- The faculty is aware of the Profile through their efforts to produce this document. The writing of this good Profile involved all staff members which is extremely important.

**THE VISITING TEAM'S RECOMMENDATIONS—FOUNDATION DOCUMENTS: MISSION, BELIEFS, AND PROFILE OF GRADUATES**

**Recommendations**

**In this section, the Team lists any recommendations to the school 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 is not required to accept or act on them.**

- The Monroe Township High School administration and staff must develop a plan to better publicize the Mission Statement (posting it in classrooms, entrance areas, gym, auditorium, referenced by teachers in classroom activities, media outreach, technology, posted on IDs etc.). Belief Statements and the Profile of the Graduates must also be further publicized.
- Consider periodic reevaluation of the Mission to continually keep it updated based on the changing needs of the community.

**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's accreditation.

Requirement of the Protocol	Action Recommended
NONE	

### 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 does not meet. Such requirements must be added as a stipulation to the school's accreditation.

Requirement of the Protocol	Action Recommended
NONE	

## THE PROFILE OF ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

The Profile of Organizational Capacity provides information and data that portray the school's capacity to produce the levels of student performance the school and its community of stakeholders desire and expect. The Profile consists of the results of a self-assessment of the school's adherence to the Middle States Standards for Accreditation.

The twelve Standards for Accreditation reflect research-based best practices for quality in schools. The Standards also represent the organizational "building blocks" that need to be in place to produce high levels of student performance. The self-assessment leads to identifying the school's strengths and areas in need of improvement.

The Profile also provides those responsible for developing the school's Plan for Growth and Improvement with a good understanding of the current status of the school.

### Standards for Accreditation for Schools

- Standard 1: Mission
- Standard 2: Governance and Leadership
- Standard 3: School Improvement Planning
- Standard 4: Finances
- Standard 5: Facilities
- Standard 6: School Organization and Staff
- Standard 7: Health and Safety
- Standard 8: Educational Program
- Standard 9: Assessment and Evidence of Student Learning
- Standard 10: Student Services
- Standard 11: Student Life and Student Activities
- Standard 12: Information Resources

## MISSION STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION

*(Indicators 1.1-1.6)*

**The Standard:** The school has a Mission that conveys clearly and concisely the school’s vision of a preferred future for the school’s students and its expectations for student learning. The Mission is consistent with ethical norms and demonstrates respect for persons of all races, creeds, and cultures. The Mission serves as the basis for daily operational and instructional decision-making as well as strategic planning. It is developed using a process that considers input by appropriate stakeholders of the school and is aligned with the needs of the community(ies) the school serves.

### A. THE VISITING TEAM'S ASSESSMENT OF THE SCHOOL'S ADHERENCE TO THIS STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION

X	It is the Visiting Team's assessment that the school <b>MEETS</b> this Standard for Accreditation.
	It is the Visiting Team's assessment that the school <b>DOES NOT MEET</b> this Standard for Accreditation. The evidence that supports this assessment is shown in the Recommended Stipulations shown in Section C, below.

### B. EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT THE TEAM'S ASSESSMENT

Evidence	Visiting Team
Data from Observations and Interviews	X
The school’s Mission	X
Samples of publications that communicate the mission to the school’s community of stakeholders	X
Marketing, recruitment, and admissions materials	X
Address of the school’s website	X
Policies related to the Mission	X

### C. THE VISITING TEAM’S OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Observations

**In this section, the Team lists 1) any general observations regarding the degree to which the school meets this Standard and/or its Indicators of Quality and 2) any areas in which the school exceeds the requirements of this Standard and/or its Indicators of Quality.**

**The Visiting Team observed that:**

- The Mission Statement is well-written, focuses on students, is articulate and concise, and instills a sense of what is expected of the school to best serve students.
- The school recognizes in the Self Study that “the school needs to have the Mission Statement visible in more areas and make sure that all staff and students are aware of the Mission.” The Visiting Team totally agrees.
- The Mission is posted in some teacher work areas, but largely is absent from classrooms and central locations.
- The Mission is clearly posted on the school website. As a Team member stated, “This school does technology well.”
- The development of the Mission Statement was a collaborative effort which took time (the process began with an initial draft in 2009 with a final version approved in February 2019).
- A member of the Planning Team stated, “The process of writing the Mission Statement allowed us to be introspective.” Eureka Monroe, Eureka! That is the core of all Middle States efforts.
- When a student was asked what the Mission Statement meant to him, he said it means “they want to prepare us for the future, for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.” That was a good answer!
- At the first evening Team gathering, an evaluator commented “There is a very ethical feeling at Monroe Township High School.” Everyone agreed and those ethics grow from the Mission Statement.
- Does Monroe Township High School clearly state what it intends to accomplish? Our Team says, “Yes!”

**The Visiting Team determined that the school exceeds the expectations of this Standard in the following ways:**

- The Monroe Mission, verified by the remark of a student in the above block, bends toward “the future.” This focus on 21<sup>st</sup> century learners is clearly manifested in the use of technology in particular the use of iPads. All Visiting Team members noted that in our classroom observations the vast majority of classes were using iPads in a student centered fashion to enhance instruction. According to one teacher, “We want this school to be more cutting edge, more college and career ready.” The latter is the living spirit of the Mission Statement.

## Recommendations

**In this section, the Team lists any recommendations to the school 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 is not required to accept or act on them.**

**The Visiting Team recommends:**

- The Mission Statement posted on the school website does not match the newly revised version. Review all documents so that the revised Mission is consistent in all publications.
- Establish groups to better incorporate the Mission Statement into the daily life of the school. As mentioned in the Action Plan, place the Mission at the bottom of tweets and other social media outlets. Many staffers mentioned placing the wording on all student IDs.
- Encourage and reinforce the Mission by keying in on the major focal points – the students and the future. Since the Monroe wording is brief and concise, incoming freshmen and new students should be required to memorize it.
- Always model the school’s “future initiatives” on the Mission Statement.
- Periodic reevaluation of the Mission is necessary to keep it updated based on the growth and changing needs of the Monroe Township School District.
- Include more parents and students in future foundation document updates. Parent and student awareness of the foundation documents was lower than hoped for per the Self Study. Solicit input from the business/community leadership. While “insiders’ certainly know the school, it is sometimes surprising what good ideas and wording will come from those outside the wire.

### 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’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 does not meet and, therefore, must be added as a stipulation to the school’s accreditation.

No.	Requirement of the Standard or Indicator	Recommended Action
X	NONE	

## GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION

### (Indicators 2.1-2.39)

**The Standard:** The school is chartered, licensed, or authorized by the appropriate civil authority(ies) and is in compliance with all applicable statutes, ordinances, and regulations of all civil authorities of the jurisdiction(s) in which the school operates. There are no legal or proprietary ambiguities in the ownership and control of or responsibility for the school.

The school’s governing body and leadership act ethically and consistently to ensure an atmosphere of mutual respect, purposeful effort, and a productive environment for teaching and learning while demonstrating adherence to the school’s Mission. The governing body and leadership maintain timely and open communication with the school’s community of stakeholders. The governing body and leadership provide the vision that drives strategic planning and day-to-day operations. They ensure the integrity, effectiveness, and reputation of the school by establishing policies, providing necessary resources, and ensuring the quality of the school’s educational program.

#### A. THE VISITING TEAM'S ASSESSMENT OF THE SCHOOL'S ADHERENCE TO THIS STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION

X	It is the Visiting Team's assessment that the school <b>MEETS</b> this Standard for Accreditation.
	It is the Visiting Team's assessment that the school <b>DOES NOT MEET</b> this Standard for Accreditation. The evidence that supports this assessment is shown in the Recommended Stipulations shown 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	X
Chart of lines of authority/responsibilities	X
Policies related to governance and leadership	X
<b>For independent, non-public, and proprietary institutions only</b>	
Names, addresses, and organizational position of the institution’s owners	NA



Names, address, affiliation of the members of the board of governance	
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**C. THE VISITING TEAM’S OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Observations**

**In this section, the Team lists 1) any general observations regarding the degree to which the school meets this Standard and/or its Indicators of Quality and 2) any areas in which the school exceeds the requirements of this Standard and/or its Indicators of Quality.**

**The Visiting Team observed that:**

- Monroe Township High School has a highly effective leadership team including, but not limited to, the superintendent, principal, and a team of vice principals.
- The entire Monroe School District operates under the direction of an active and interested Board of Education.
- School leadership fosters a productive environment for teaching and learning utilizing timely and open communication with all stakeholders.
- The leadership possesses the vision necessary for day to day operations as well as the long term planning needed for future endeavors.
- A member of the Board of Education told the Visiting Team that “We would not be here without our quality staff and administration.” An atmosphere of mutual respect is evident at Monroe.
- Classroom staff continually told the Team that “School leadership is very involved in the school and the leadership and stakeholders work toward common and established goals.”
- A member of the nursing staff said, “The District is accommodating. It promotes all areas of activity at this school.”
- The Governing Body was present at the Team reception were available to the Visiting Team.
- Several staff members and the principal agreed that parent involvement within the school was high and again “There was mutual respect between both groups.”
- The central administration and building leadership use strategic planning to reach long term goals. Evert administrator was “current” on educational issues.
- Per Foundation Documents, the relationship between academics and athletics was proudly and abundantly displayed in the high school. Developing and fostering the spirit of sportsmanship transcends the arenas of competition and flows into the whole “fabric of life” at Monroe. Credit the Director of Athletics, the building administration and coaches for their energy and dedication to what a Team member called “holistic nurturing” of students as athletes and vice versa.
- Per the first rule of Administration 101, the office of the principal and assistant principals is the hallways of the high school. The Monroe Team gets an “A.” They were always active and visible in the highways and byways of the high school.
- Administrators used technology to better maintain communication with faculty and all stakeholders.
- In summary, the Visiting Team states that the governance and leadership at Monroe Township High School is a highly cohesive cadre of professionals who effectively include the faculty and full

staff in creating a learning atmosphere that prides itself on cultivating change, productivity, and preparing students for the future.

**The Visiting Team determined that the school exceeds the expectations of this Standard in the following ways:**

- “They have Purple and Gold running through their veins. They believe in us and we believe in them. The administrators’ doors are always open. You talk to them and they really, really listen. Morale is high. They are humane people.” The latter are teacher and students comments about the administrative team at the high school: Acting Principal Scott Madreperla and his assistant principals. They operate a smooth, safe and positive learning environment. They maintain an open door policy where students, faculty and staff may bring concerns or solutions to them. They are taking Monroe Township High School in the right direction and it is an exemplary direction. Our Team congratulates them for their sterling, daily efforts.
- The Visiting Team found strong evidence of leadership by consensus. The “by-in” status of the membership is active throughout the school. Why and how? See the previous bullet.
- The leadership actively promotes and acknowledges the strength of the faculty at faculty meetings and “Meet and Greets” gatherings.
- The Governing Body exhibits full commitment and investment in the betterment of the entire learning community. As one teacher stated, “The administration, Board of Education and the superintendent come to all of our events.”

## Recommendations

**In this section, the Team lists any recommendations to the school 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 is not required to accept or act on them.**

**The Visiting Team recommends:**

- Take steps to support the continuity of the current high school administrative team as they are a professional asset to the school and the district.
- In order to achieve Middle States Performance Goals, and in light of the defeat of the referendum, the Board of School Directors and Central Office will require future referendum support to maintain the high level of academic programs, quality personnel and high student performance currently present in the high school.
- The leadership team must play a key role in the implementation and maintenance of the Middle States Action Plans.

## 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’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 does not meet and, therefore, must be added as a stipulation to the school’s accreditation.

No.	Requirement of the Standard or Indicator	Recommended Action
X	NONE	

## SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLANNING STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION

*(Indicators 3.1-3.8)*

**The Standard:** The school plans strategically and continuously to grow and improve its students' performance and the school's capacity to produce the levels of student performance desired and expected by its community of stakeholders. The school's strategic plan is aligned with and supports achievement of its Mission. The school uses a collaborative process to develop and implement its strategic plan for growth and improvement and ensures that the plan includes professional development activities the staff needs to implement the plan and achieve its goals. The school improvement planning is monitored, periodically assessed and revised as needed.

### A. THE VISITING TEAM'S ASSESSMENT OF THE SCHOOL'S ADHERENCE TO THIS STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION

X	It is the Visiting Team's assessment that the school <b>MEETS</b> this Standard for Accreditation.
	It is the Visiting Team's assessment that the school <b>DOES NOT MEET</b> this Standard for Accreditation. The evidence that supports this assessment is shown in the Recommended Stipulations shown in Section C, below.

### B. EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT THE TEAM'S ASSESSMENT

Evidence	Visiting Team
Data from Observations and Interviews	X
Strategic and/or long-range plan	X
Development/institutional advancement plan	X
Enrollment plan	X
Policies related to school improvement planning	X

### C. THE VISITING TEAM'S OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Observations

**In this section, the Team lists 1) any general observations regarding the degree to which the school meets this Standard and/or its Indicators of Quality and 2) any areas in which the school exceeds the requirements of this Standard and/or its Indicators of Quality.**

### **The Visiting Team observed that:**

- Monroe Township High School listed 7 school improvement plans in the Self Study: Strategic Plan/Long Range Plan, Financial Plan, Facilities, Technology, Professional Development, Staffing, and Curriculum Review/Staffing. All plans were up-to-date (reviewed/updated yearly).
- Planning is done collaboratively and staff members were aware of strategic goals. The Team felt with certainty that stakeholders from community grassroots to the school board have opportunities to provide input into various plans.
- The school has a detailed strategic plan that has received school board approval.
- The Planning Team and interviewed faculty said that they felt supported by the school board on Middle States and other school improvement projects.
- A Planning Team member stated, “The Self Study process has helped inform and unify the school and has allowed stakeholders to take a step back to reflect on the school’s progress and process.
- Frequent, structured common planning time “encouraged and facilitated teacher dialogue on continuous improvement.”
- The faculty told the Team that planning and curricular topics and changes “often come from educators and it is welcomed as a grassroots effort.”
- The majority of the interviewed faculty stated that curricular planning is collaborative and from the bottom up.
- The Visiting Team was impressed with communication between the school and stakeholders via electronic methods. Communication and collaboration are kernel words for the School Improvement Standard and Monroe uses technology effectively.
- Directives from state and federal sources are quickly implemented because of an interlocking system of school improvement and curricular planning.
- Stakeholders believe that the Middle States Student and Organizational Objective are attainable.

### **The Visiting Team determined that the school exceeds the expectations of this Standard in the following ways:**

- The Team congratulates Monroe Township for the vigor and dedication toward all school improvement planning and not only the Middle States Objectives. Most importantly, one can see the school philosophy in planning is to focus on the students and what they need. Planning on meeting the needs of the students is tidal gravity at Monroe Township.

## **Recommendations**

**In this section, the Team lists any recommendations to the school 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 is not required to accept or act on them.**

### **The Visiting Team recommends:**

- Recalculate high school building plans after the defeat of the building referendum in March 2019.

Monroe is blessed with smart and dedicated people. The growing population of student body is a challenge but with all stakeholders working together solutions will follow.

- Improve communication with all stakeholders via the Organizational Capacity Goal One.
- The *Excellence by Design* protocol should be used as an opportunity to develop teachers to take on more active rolls in the school improvement process. The Visiting Team suggests that a plan be established introducing more new staff and parents into Middle States and strategic planning roles. The Mid-Term Middle States Visit and the next strategic planning initiatives are good points to activate these recommendations.
- Nothing will throw the proverbial monkey wrench into school improvement planning quicker than the feeling that initiatives are “top down or administrative heavy.” While the latter was not a major conversation during the Team visit, it was mentioned in the Self Study: “...initiatives that are proposed and planned by small non-representative subsets of the faculty...feedback from parents is considered in a reactionary way, etc.” This issue needs some sunlight during the length of the new protocol.
- The Team encourages more parent and community involvement in future planning efforts.

### 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 evaluation.**

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 it Indicators of Quality the school does not meet and, therefore, must be added as a stipulation to the school’s accreditation.**

No.	Requirement of the Standard or Indicator	Recommended Action
X	NONE	

## FINANCES STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION

*(Indicators 4.1-4.17)*

**The Standard:** The school has financial resources that are sufficient to provide its students with the educational program defined in the school’s Mission and strategic plan. Financial resources are stable, and indications are they will continue to be stable for the foreseeable future. The school uses business practices that are ethical and follow accepted budgeting and accounting principles. The practices promote confidence in the school’s ability to manage its fiscal and material resources in a responsible manner. The school dedicates its financial resources to implementing its educational program, services, activities, and operations.

### A. THE VISITING TEAM'S ASSESSMENT OF THE SCHOOL'S ADHERENCE TO THIS STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION

X	It is the Visiting Team's assessment that the school <b>MEETS</b> this Standard for Accreditation.
	It is the Visiting Team's assessment that the school <b>DOES NOT MEET</b> this Standard for Accreditation. The evidence that supports this assessment is shown in the Recommended Stipulations shown 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 ongoing 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	X
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 AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Observations

**In this section, the Team lists 1) any general observations regarding the degree to which the school meets this Standard and/or its Indicators of Quality and 2) any areas in which the school exceeds the requirements of this Standard and/or its Indicators of Quality.**

#### The Visiting Team observed that:

- Monroe Township implements financial policies and procedures in line with accepted business practices and regulations established by the New Jersey State Board of Education. The business office exercises prudent control over financial obligations.
- The school is financially sound. The district’s finances are “stable but long term risk is there” due to the recent defeat of a referendum that would have added an addition to the high school and construct a new middle school. The risk is caused by rising student populations inside the current buildings. If enrollments continue to grow, trailers would be necessary to provide academic services. According to the Business Manager, the cost of trailers must come from the general fund which would “cannibalize programs that have been implemented” and lead to cuts in many programs as well as increase student/teacher ratios.
- Currently, the district’s expenditures and revenue are in balance; there was no debt during 2017 – 2018.
- The school develops a “zero-based’ yearly budget.
- Financial personnel possess education and experience that makes them highly qualified for overseeing the complex business operations of the school district.
- The Team found ample monetary support of long range and short term strategic planning so as to remain proactive further enhancing the fiscal health of the high school.
- Proprietary programs (Falcon Care and Early Childhood Education) brought in approximately \$1.6 million dollars to the school in the past two years.
- The school offers all staff options to “opt out” and “opt down” in their health insurance plans.
- The faculty told the Team that “our budgetary needs are consistently met.”
- 88% of the revenue comes from property taxes, 5% from the state, 60% Of the town lives in retirement communities and 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the budget goes to the special education program.
- The Monroe Township School District financial arm earned a perfect score in financial practices from QSAC last year.

**The Visiting Team determined that the school exceeds the expectations of this Standard in the following ways:**



- During an interview about finances, a CPA said, “The difference at Monroe is we have people who have been here a long time and who care.” This is an eye opening perspective. Some financial offices are only driven by dollars and cents. Congratulation to the business office for keeping their eye on the people who make the district successful and not just numbers.
- The overall philosophy of the school budget is “democracy.” All voices are heard throughout the yearly process of passing a budget and that makes “the outcome special.”
- The propriety programs (Falcon Care and Early Childhood Education) brought in approximately \$1.6 million dollars to the school in the past two years. These programs are exemplary – they foster a sense of community, provide unique learning opportunities and help children. This is a win for all Monroe stakeholders.
- The school ‘has a hard time turning anyone away....if it helps the process of education in anyway, we will do it.” Our Team congratulated this type of thinking. It is indicative of a district which values its staff and their contributions and experience and not just the bottom line.

## Recommendations

**In this section, the Team lists any recommendations to the school 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 is not required to accept or act on them.**

### The Visiting Team recommends:

- As one member of the financial staff noted, “The greatest financial threat to this district is trailers.” The school must develop a post-referendum plan to avoid this threat that will impair so many good programs that are daily occurrences inside the crowded halls of Monroe High School.
- Foster community outreach especially to stakeholders who are not directly connected to the school to advance the Mission Statement and enable sustainable growth in the district.
- Provide ongoing financial support for unique Monroe programs such as AVID, STEM, UNIFIED, Project Lead the Way, Falcon Care, etc.) They are flag ship programs!
- Review funding sources to identify areas of extra income through the introduction of new proprietary programs which might mitigate spending shortfalls.
- Like all school districts, continue the good fight for equitable state aid for public school education in New Jersey.

## 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’s term of accreditation.**

No.	Requirement of the Standard or Indicator	Recommended Action
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X	NONE
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### Recommended Stipulations

In this section, the Team lists any requirement(s) of this Standard and/or its Indicators of Quality the school does not meet and, therefore, must be added as a stipulation to the school's accreditation.

No.	Requirement of the Standard or Indicator	Recommended Action
X	NONE	

## FACILITIES STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION

*(Indicators 5.1-5.14)*

**The Standard:** The school provides facilities that are safe, clean, and well maintained and that are appropriate and adequate to achieve the school’s Mission. The facilities provide a physical environment that supports delivery of the school’s educational program, services, and activities, and the ability of students to achieve the levels of learning and performance expected of them. The facilities are inspected regularly for effective operation and are in compliance with all applicable health and safety codes of the civil jurisdiction(s) within which the school is located.

### A. THE VISITING TEAM'S ASSESSMENT OF THE SCHOOL'S ADHERENCE TO THIS STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION

X	It is the Visiting Team's assessment that the school <b>MEETS</b> this Standard for Accreditation.
	It is the Visiting Team's assessment that the school <b>DOES NOT MEET</b> this Standard for Accreditation. The evidence that supports this assessment is shown in the Recommended Stipulations shown 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	X
Long-range facilities plan	X
Maintenance/repair schedules	X
Plans for any facilities improvements	X
Policies related to facilities	X

### C. THE VISITING TEAM’S OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Observations

**In this section, the Team lists 1) any general observations regarding the degree to which the school meets this Standard and/or its Indicators of Quality and 2) any areas in which the school exceeds the requirements of this Standard and/or its Indicators of Quality.**

### **The Visiting Team observed that:**

- Monroe Township High School opened in 2011. It is a three story building with a multi-wing design in a peaceful suburban setting. Athletic fields and adequate student/staff parking are adjacent to the school. Part of the structure is a preschool, The Falcon's Nest.
- Due to the recent construction, Monroe will impress the first time visitor as a beautiful state of the art public school with facilities that include the fully operational preschool, digital photography classrooms, fine arts and industrial arts spaces, a music suite that would rival some college level structures, a beautiful Performing Arts Center, a myriad of food classrooms/kitchens including the "Falcon Bistro," an active TV studio (the oral report was delivered on closed circuit TV), two large gymnasiums, wrestling room, weight room, a spacious Career and Counseling Center, and a busy Library/Media Center.
- The Team "walkabout" of the building revealed a pristine environment in which to learn. The boiler room was both automated and efficient. The Team Chair stated, "After more than two dozen school evaluations, this is the cleanest boiler room I have ever seen." All maintenance workers are licensed and accredited as necessary and the facilities are regularly inspected and compliant with health and safety codes of the local township and the New Jersey Department of Education. It was obvious that the school administration see facility maintenance as a priority.
- The HVAC system on the roof is in excellent working order. The school has confronted some roof issues in recent years but all were handled directly and have not caused further problems.
- The Self Study Adequacy of Facilities listed all but four Indicators as satisfactory. The four listed as Needs Improvement include Science Laboratories, Library/Learning Media Center, Indoor Athletic Space, and Cafeteria Dining Space. This was due, in all cases, to the increased student population and overcrowding in those areas.
- The school has a generator that is hooked up to cover power and lights. There have been some issues with power outages in the school but this is due to a situation with the power company – First Energy. First Energy is aware that the problem is on their end and they are currently working to correct it.
- Maintenance requests are handled through a software system called SCHOOLDUDE. A teacher sends a request via computer and it is handled in a timely fashion.
- The school conducts mandatory drills (fire, lockdown, shelter in place, etc) with regularity. There is adequate security throughout the school before, during and after classes.
- A new vestibule will be built at the main entrance to bolster security.
- There are currently 217 cameras in the building but there is a perceived need for more with a "perfect world" estimation of 500.
- Vehicular traffic in and out of the school parking lot at the beginning and end of the school day was described by a Team member as "a bit daunting." This is due to the increased enrollment in the school. The school security, township police and outside traffic engineers have reviewed the situation and are working to keep issues to a minimum or at bay.
- New bleachers were erected over the past three years to cover the increase in spectators at field events.
- The cafeteria and food preparation areas were spotless, sanitary, and well-maintained. METZ is the contracted food service for the school. The atmosphere in the kitchens was friendly and positive. The FDA has visited the school's kitchens and labeled it as providing Best Practices for child nutrition. The meals are healthy and there are offerings for students who have gluten free needs,

are vegetarian and/or vegan and vegetarian. Kitchen equipment is up-to-date as is seating for the students. The challenge for the cafeteria is the students and how to handle the influx of more students in the cafeterias. There are two cafes serving 700 students per lunch for three lunch periods.

- In summary, the students and faculty of Monroe Township High School have a modern and comfortable physical setting in which learning does take place. The current facilities support delivery of the Mission Statement and the educational programs and services. Rising enrollment is the challenge for the future.

**The Visiting Team determined that the school exceeds the expectations of this Standard in the following ways:**

- The Team was extremely impressed by building maintenance supervisor Dominick Tringali. He genuinely cares and takes great personal pride in the physical appearance of Monroe Township High School and the safety of all stakeholders. He goes “above and beyond” in his duties. He is an example of Monroe Price! A hearty commendation is also given to Dominick’s team for maintaining the cleanliness of the high school which shines from every corner to every corner!

## Recommendations

**In this section, the Team lists any recommendations to the school 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 is not required to accept or act on them.**

**The Visiting Team recommends:**

- The Monroe building and campus is large. Therefore, more security cameras in the building and externally for the coverage of identified blind spots are reasonable.
- Continue to study and ameliorate the morning and afternoon traffic situation around the school. By doing so, the district is showing due diligence in preventing accidents.
- As the school population increases, more custodial and maintenance personnel may be necessary in order to maintain the current high standards of cleanliness.
- Follow through with the plans to add a “security vestibule” at the main student entrance.
- Work out the power issues with the energy provider, First Energy, as soon as possible.
- The Visiting Team knows the school district will “recalculate” efforts to address the failed referendum vote. A logical spot to begin would be the four areas listed as Needs Improvement in the Self Study: science laboratories, library/learning media center, indoor athletic space and cafeteria dining space. The Visiting Team sincerely hopes that the renting of educational trailer space does not become a reality for we agree it will “cannibalize the general budget” to the detriment of outstanding academic offerings now in place at the high school.

## 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'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 does not meet and, therefore, must be added as a stipulation to the school's accreditation.

No.	Requirement of the Standard or Indicator	Recommended Action
X	NONE	

## SCHOOL ORGANIZATION AND STAFF STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION

*(Indicators 6.1-6.37[PA6.38-PA6.41])*

**The Standard:** The school’s organization facilitates achievement of its purposes and core values as expressed in its Mission and successful implementation of its educational program, services, and activities. Members of the administrative, instructional, and support staffs are qualified, competent, and sufficient in number to provide a high quality educational experience as defined by the school’s Mission. Staff members possess the qualifications required by the civil authority in which the institution operates to administer and teach the program(s) to which they are assigned. Staff members are evaluated regularly based on clear expectations for performance and are provided with professional development experiences that address areas in which staff members need to grow and/or improve. The school’s leaders and staff demonstrate collegial and collaborative relationships.

### A. THE VISITING TEAM'S ASSESSMENT OF THE SCHOOL'S ADHERENCE TO THIS STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION

X	It is the Visiting Team's assessment that the school <b>MEETS</b> this Standard for Accreditation.
	It is the Visiting Team's assessment that the school <b>DOES NOT MEET</b> this Standard for Accreditation. The evidence that supports this assessment is shown in the Recommended Stipulations shown 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 and school system	X
List of members of the professional and support staffs	X
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	X
Instruments used for evaluating the performance of the staff	X
Professional development plan	X
Policies related to school climate and organization	X

## C. THE VISITING TEAM'S OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Observations

**In this section, the Team lists 1) any general observations regarding the degree to which the school meets this Standard and/or its Indicators of Quality and 2) any areas in which the school exceeds the requirements of this Standard and/or its Indicators of Quality.**

#### **The Visiting Team observed that:**

- The responsibilities of school employees are clearly organized and well defined in district handbooks and contractual documents. Climate surveys are used by the district. Team interviews with faculty confirmed an overall knowledge of individual responsibilities. This level of understanding strengthens all school operations and establishes an effective environment for student learning.
- There is a two day new teacher summer orientation and mentor program where new teachers are introduced to district policies and procedures. Additionally, a three year guided professional development plan is given to all new teachers new to the district covering such everyday topics as lesson planning, classroom management and assessments.
- The Marzano Teachers Evaluation System is used to evaluate teachers through the use of the iObservation online tool for organization of lesson materials and pre/post observation conferences. A summative evaluation is also organized via the same online tool which allows for teacher uploading of artifacts such as a portfolio assessment.
- There are monthly meetings of a faculty council at which there is a dialogue between administration and faculty representatives to discuss concerns. Together, the administration works with the faculty to develop and implement plans of action for conflict resolution.
- There are written descriptions of teacher duty assignments that are provided on a quarterly basis via email along with duty allocations. A professional development needs assessment is used to inform the staff of professional development opportunities.
- Administrative prep periods are utilized to provide ample opportunity for staff dialogue and development training. Department and faculty meetings are also used for training, development and communication issues.
- Teacher retention date at the high school is high. Many teachers have been with the school for 11-20 years.
- A well-defined set of reporting relationships exists. Administrative, instructional and support staffs are qualified and competent to deliver on the Mission Statement and all Foundation Documents.
- At this point in time, the Team saw sufficient staffing to meet and deliver a quality educational product to the students. This may prove a future challenge with the growth of student population in the district.
- Team Chair interview with the union representatives was highlighted by respect and cooperation between both sides. When a problem occurs, union and management work together on a solution. The union spoke highly of the acting high school principal.
- The Visiting Team saw school days at Monroe Township High School run smoothly without design



or organizational flaws. Well-done, Monroe High!

**The Visiting Team determined that the school exceeds the expectations of this Standard in the following ways:**

- The mantra of the staff is best summed up in two questions posed by Team interviewees: “Is this good for all the kids?” and “Are we moving forward?” With this type of overall faculty attitude, Monroe Township High School shows support for all types of students along with the intent of making students true 21<sup>st</sup> century learners. Teachers are given the authority to run classrooms as needed which shows that the administration trusts teachers to be a major influence for Monroe students.
- Good teachers are the heart of any school and the Team saw tremendous respect between administration and the faculty. Several teachers noted that they “couldn’t do what they do without the support of the principal and other administrators.” This mutual respect is essential in keeping the organizational climate of a school running well.
- True collegiality rules at Monroe Township High School. Teachers and building administrators spoke freely and truthfully with and about one another. Monroe is blessed with humane and approachable people.

## Recommendations

**In this section, the Team lists any recommendations to the school 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 is not required to accept or act on them.**

**The Visiting Team recommends:**

- While there are programs for new hires before the beginning of classes that are commendable, there does not seem to be a consistent program for staff hired once the school year has started. While each department does assist those individuals, a teacher stated, “Those people are basically thrown to the wolves in some departments.” The latter was greeted with positive head shaking and basically a chorus of “Amen’s” by the majority in attendance. The administration should investigate this area and institute a specific training regimen for mid-year hiring’s.
- The dialogue between administration and faculty regarding best practices for Action Plan implementation must follow all seven years of the new Middle States protocol. It cannot disappear somewhere along the journey.
- The use of faculty needs assessments as a base for professional development offerings received “high praise” for keying in on goals of the organization. This should be a general practice during the life of the new document.
- Always keep an open eye and ear for “bottom to top” organizational ideas from the faculty and support staff.
- Monitor class size. The need to modify lessons to give the right amount of attention to all is a challenge even for highly educated professionals. This challenge will become more evident with

the constant increase in student enrollment.

- While the Visiting Team has praised the School Organization and Staff Standard at Monroe Township High School, we believe there is always room for improvement in every facet of school organization lest minor issues turn into major ones. Continually review school protocols and procedures. Keep the level of communication open. Evaluate SOP (Standard operating Procedures) often and with vigor. When necessary, make changes.

### 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’s term of accreditation.**

No.	Requirement of the Standard or Indicator	Recommended Action
X	NONE	

### Recommended Stipulations

No.	Requirement of the Standard or Indicator	Recommended Action
X	NONE	

## HEALTH AND SAFETY STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION

*(Indicators 7.1-7.18)*

**The Standard:** The school provides a safe, orderly, and healthy environment for teaching and learning that meets the health and safety requirements of the civil jurisdiction(s) in which the school operates. The school has and implements policies and/or procedural guidelines to ensure the health and safety of students, the staff, and visitors to the school. The school has and implements plans for responding to emergencies and crises.

### A. THE VISITING TEAM'S ASSESSMENT OF THE SCHOOL'S ADHERENCE TO THIS STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION

X	It is the Visiting Team's assessment that the school <b>MEETS</b> this Standard for Accreditation.
	It is the Visiting Team's assessment that the school <b>DOES NOT MEET</b> this Standard for Accreditation. The evidence that supports this assessment is shown in the Recommended Stipulations shown 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	X
Record of emergency drills	X
Emergency Procedures section of Faculty Handbook	X

### C. THE VISITING TEAM'S OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Observations

**In this section, the Team lists 1) any general observations regarding the degree to which the school meets this Standard and/or its Indicators of Quality and 2) any areas in which the school exceeds the requirements of this Standard and/or its Indicators of Quality.**

**The Visiting Team observed that:**

- Monroe Township High School has established a safe and healthy environment for students and staff. It completes all township and state required drills, has up-to-date safety measures (fire extinguishers, AEDs, etc.), has clear staff /student policies, completes all health inspections, and provides care to all students.
- Three armed guards are on duty during the school day to ensure safety. They are all retired police officers. The district hired them after the school shooting in Parkland, Florida. The school has “a proactive attitude about safety and security.”
- Construction is planned on a vestibule outside the main entrance to increase security by meeting visitors outside the main entrance area of the school.
- Teachers have assigned “hall duties” (Hurrah!) and are positioned in all hallways and in front of bathrooms to check student compliance with the code of conduct. Monroe has a “no hats, no colors, no hoods” policy. The student discipline policy is clear and well-written.
- 217 video cameras are used to patrol the school. The township SWAT team trains at night for “active shooter” scenarios. The Team saw an “adaptive attitude” with security that will serve the school well in changing times and with the many new technological advances.
- The school has clearly marked AED signs throughout the building. Exit and evacuation procedures are posted everywhere.
- There are three certified school nurses (two who staff the office and one who conducts field trips) as well as two “floater” nurses for the district who can be utilized during times of high need. The nurses deal with a large amount of clerical work with no support staff and old copy machines and scanners.
- Per the nurses, “The district is very accommodating and we usually get what we want.” The student body speaks very well about the nurses: “...the nurses are amazing...they give immediate help...I feel very safe in the nurse’s suite.”
- The Monroe Township High School has established a safe and healthy environment for students and staff. The district’s efforts are highly commended by the Visiting Team.

**The Visiting Team determined that the school exceeds the expectations of this Standard in the following ways:**

- When asked, “do you feel your child is safe in this school?” a group of parents unanimously and immediately responded either “yes” or “absolutely.” All students said they feel safe at Monroe. The school is very safe and is perceived as such. A most crucial job at any school is to keep students and staff safe and in a school the size of Monroe (and growing) that is a monumental task. We applaud the Board of Education, the security officers, nurses, grounds/maintenance crew, teachers, and building administration for the excellent security at Monroe Township High School. Continue your vigilance.

## Recommendations

**In this section, the Team lists any recommendations to the school 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 is not required to accept or act on them.**

**The Visiting Team recommends:**

- During an observed lockdown procedure, a class was being conducted in a hallway and went quickly into a room. The door was not locked (although the teacher had keys to lock it) and the students were visible from the hallway (which presents a serious safety risk). Review procedures for classes which are conducted in non-traditional settings especially hallways due to space limitations because of the growing enrollment in the high school.
- Provide the nurse’s office with an evacuation chair to allow students with mobility issues to exit via stairways in case of a power emergency and disabled elevators.
- In light of the growing enrollment, consider the purchase of additional video cameras. Make sure security cameras are functioning and up-to-date. Search out “dead spots” for needed coverage. Many schools have found it useful to ask reliable students to identify areas that need more coverage. Nobody knows the lay of the land better than the students!
- Require all students to wear their ID tags on a lanyard for visibility and student safety. The Team found all students told about this recommendation responded positively.
- The traffic pattern for students and parents entering and exiting the parking lot in the morning and at dismissal presents a safety issue for drivers and pedestrians. On Day One of the visit the Team vehicle driven by the Chair was shown the New Jersey State Bird by a woman exiting the lot. What unwritten rule of navigation was broken was unknown to us. In the interest of safety and due diligence the services of a traffic engineer is suggested.
- With increasing enrollment, monitor the ratio of nursing staff to students throughout the length of the new Middle States protocol.

**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’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 does not meet and, therefore, must be added as a stipulation to the school’s accreditation.**

No.	Requirement of the Standard or Indicator	Recommended Action
X	NONE	

## EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION

*(Indicators 8.1-8.61)*

**The Standard:** The school’s educational program consists of carefully planned and well-executed programs of study that are based on appropriate content and learning standards, instructional methods, and assessments of student learning that reflect current research and best practices in learning and teaching. The educational program is aligned with the school’s Mission, approved by the governing body, and sufficiently financed and supported. The educational program is designed so that all students can achieve at the levels desired by the school’s community of stakeholders.

### A. THE VISITING TEAM'S ASSESSMENT OF THE SCHOOL'S ADHERENCE TO THIS STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION

X	It is the Visiting Team's assessment that the school <b>MEETS</b> this Standard for Accreditation.
	It is the Visiting Team's assessment that the school <b>DOES NOT MEET</b> this Standard for Accreditation. The evidence that supports this assessment is shown in the Recommended Stipulations shown 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
Scope and sequence charts	X
Written curriculum guides for each component of the educational program	X
Master schedule	X
Policies related to educational program	X

### C. THE VISITING TEAM'S OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Observations

**In this section, the Team lists 1) any general observations regarding the degree to which the school meets this Standard and/or its Indicators of Quality and 2) any areas in which the school exceeds the requirements of this Standard and/or its Indicators of Quality.**

**The Visiting Team observed that:**

- “These students are engaged in learning – very much so.” So said a Team member and those words best summarize the whole observation piece. Isn’t that what education is about?
- Curriculum at Monroe Township High School is aligned to the New Jersey Student Learning Standards as well as the National Next Generation Science Standards and the National Social Studies Standards for College, Career and Civic Readiness. There is a five year review/revision cycle that is district wide.
- Curriculum Mapping begins the revision cycle and there is “heavy staff involvement and collaboration to facilitate new Curriculum Maps.” The latter are “shared and turn keyed with the staff.”
- K-12 District Supervisors oversee summer work that turns the mapping into Curriculum Documents. Per the Self Study, “The District uses a backward design, UBD model and infuses Standards and rich skill driven content with cross-curricular threads.” This is a collaborative process involving the entire faculty.
- Supervisors submit an approved document to the Office of the Assistant Superintendent. The document works its way through curriculum committees, the subcommittee of the Board of Education and then to the final approval by the full Board of Education.
- The District Mainpage link allows public and teacher access to approved documents.
- The Team found the Monroe Curriculum and Instruction Model “intense, highly committed, on-going and very acceptable.” The Mission Statement is not overlooked in the planning process, for there is a district commitment that “all curriculum areas and all students receive instruction that develop critical thinking, reasoning, problem-solving, presentation and study skills.
- Each Monroe Township student in grades 9-12 is provided with an iPad. The iPad is used for class work and homework “to communicate, collaborate, research, read, take notes and explore new digital content.” Happily, the Visiting Team saw students actively use the new digital tools during classroom visits.
- Not only is the Monroe District growing rapidly, it is becoming a diverse community. The district has experienced growth in its English Language Learner (ELL) population and has positively responded with a Sheltered Instruction Plan and additional support to content area teachers.
- Students’ work is reflective of their grade levels and allows students to be creative when demonstrating knowledge. Instruction is differentiated to ensure that each student benefits the most from the learning process.
- Extensive and effective use of technology to engage student learning augments the overall learning and cultural experience in the classroom.
- Monroe students profit from the copious amount of educational programs which allow them to pursue academic interests at all levels. The Team was impressed by such programs as AVID (Advanced VIA Individual Determination), UNIFIED, Structured STEM Academy, Falcon Life Program, Project Lead the Way and many others. One junior student stated, “You can be anything and study any subject you want at my high school.”
- While talking with the Team, Monroe students were articulate and clearly stated their views and concerns. This is a direct result of the open and powerful education available at the high school.

- A variety of clubs such as journalism, chess and robotics among others allow students to excel in areas besides classroom experiences. Many students take advantage of the substantial and award winning art and music programs.
- The Team saw a district highly committed to a “tiered approach” with a variety of on-going professional development opportunities to support consistent growth in the curriculum and classroom instruction for the students at Monroe.
- The heart of Monroe Township High School, the Educational Standard, is sound. Curriculum is constantly updated. A myriad of remediation sources are available to assist student learning. Yes, the Educational Standard is sound. Monroe High School is a bedrock public school in the best tradition of the American Public School experiment.
- Repetition for effect: “Students are engaged in learning – very much so.”

**The Visiting Team determined that the school exceeds the expectations of this Standard in the following ways:**

- The entire Monroe Township School District is dedicated to infusing all curriculum and instruction with the “whole child” philosophy that includes steady honed attention not only to content but also reflects a keen attention to 21<sup>st</sup> century skills and the Mission Statement and other Foundation Beliefs of the district. The district is successful – Hail Monroe!

## Recommendations

**In this section, the Team lists any recommendations to the school 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 is not required to accept or act on them.**

**The Visiting Team recommends:**

- As conditions allow, expand program offerings to include more career readiness activities. While there is a great national focus on preparing students for university life and while college is a noble path it is not the only path. Encourage vocational-technical, technical, and trade careers to match everyone’s talent level. As the old adage tells us, no man who can work with his hands will ever go hungry.
- Continue to encourage an appreciation of the arts, music and drama. These cultural items elevate the human spirit. As we design future curriculums, we must never undersell the necessity of these very necessary subjects.
- Since Monroe is an academic school that will send most of its students to college, it is important to incorporate statistically balanced graduate surveys to assess the quality of the taught curriculum. Resources and training on the effective use of this resource is available from professional journals and online (such as Naviance). They offer real time feedback on post-secondary success (or lack of it) on the school graduates.
- The building referendum was defeated leaving the school with the challenge of classroom space. While the district recalculates options, consider the services of outside consultants. Classroom



instruction should happen in classrooms and not in hallways. This problem has a potential to cut into the educational programs of Monroe Township High School.

- While the educational worth of the school is great, there is room for improvement with SAT scores, planning for the SAT's and PSAT improvement. The Academic Performance Objectives address these areas and the Visiting Team know Middle States Goals will be met (and exceeded) during the length of the new protocol.

### 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'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 does not meet and, therefore, must be added as a stipulation to the school's accreditation.**

No.	Requirement of the Standard or Indicator	Recommended Action
X	NONE	

## ASSESSMENT AND EVIDENCE OF STUDENT LEARNING STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION (Indicators 9.1-9.15)

**The Standard:** The school has a program for assessing student learning and performance that is consistent with the school’s Mission. The program is based on current research and best practices and is aligned with the school’s educational and instructional programs. The assessment program systematically collects and rigorously analyzes quantifiable and observable evidence of student learning and performance and growth using multiple, valid, and reliable assessments that are respected by the school’s community of stakeholders. The school expects all students to learn and demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and habits of mind required in the educational program. Students are learning and performing at the levels expected, or the school has and is implementing a plan to raise learning and performance to the expected levels.

### A. THE VISITING TEAM'S ASSESSMENT OF THE SCHOOL'S ADHERENCE TO THIS STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION

X	It is the Visiting Team's assessment that the school <b>MEETS</b> this Standard for Accreditation.
	It is the Visiting Team's assessment that the school <b>DOES NOT MEET</b> this Standard for Accreditation. The evidence that supports this assessment is shown in the Recommended Stipulations shown 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 AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Observations

**In this section, the Team lists 1) any general observations regarding the degree to which the school meets this Standard and/or its Indicators of Quality and 2) any areas in which the school exceeds the requirements of this Standard and/or its Indicators of Quality.**

**The Visiting Team observed that:**

- Monroe Township High School keeps detailed statistical information in its assessment “war chest.” The school uses quantifiable evidence to measure instructional effectiveness.
- Assessments appear to be aligned with all levels of curriculum, instruction, and the Mission Statement of the school. Assessments given to students are used nationally and statewide to measure student success. Methods and measures used to show evidence of student learning include summative, benchmark, formative and diagnostic assessments.
- The school uses a number of platforms to track student learning. These platforms include the Genesis grading system, Schoology, Google Classroom and other internet based technologies to keep students informed and learning.
- 4 interim reports and 4 report cards are issued yearly to parents.
- The Team found that “emphasis is placed on teaching empathy in addition to academic skills.”
- The UNIFIED programs in physical education, music and other areas allow students to learn and grow academically and empathetically. AVID aims to help “kids in the middle,” not the high fliers nor the low level, but those student who “fall between the cracks” in other schools by placing them in classes with structured lessons to help them learn in high school and beyond. The STEM Academy encourages smaller class sizes and points students toward future STEM careers. There are enrichment programs for freshmen to help them succeed academically and socially.
- Student scores for the PARCC assessment meet or exceed the state average. Though the SAT scores are good, there is an effort to improve them via a Student Performance Objective. Math and language classes include SAT review. All students take the PSAT during the sophomore and junior years. Over 387 students who took the AP Tests last year, 85% scored at least a 3 on the exam. Approximately 50% of the students are on the honor roll. The graduation rate for the Class of 2018 was 97.5%.
- This is the first year that the high school has implemented a sheltered instruction program for the growing ELL population.
- Appropriate records of student learning and performance are maintained through the guidance department. General standards for transcript use and control are exercised. This includes standards for student confidentiality. The Team received no confidentiality complaints from parents or students.
- In interviews with parents, it was evident that communication with families regarding student progress was regular and meaningful.
- The Visiting Team commends the school for demanding academic progress and the use of proper assessment tools to report student progress accurately and confidentially to the home front.

**The Visiting Team determined that the school exceeds the expectations of this Standard in the following ways:**

- The nature of testing requirements in New Jersey and nationwide does provide schools with a myriad of data. Is it used properly? Does it reach teachers for discussion, collaboration, and

proposals to attack deficiencies? Is it used to change the “taught” curriculum? Unfortunately, in many schools the answer is no. At Monroe, the answer is yes! Curriculum leaders and teachers use the data to evaluate the curriculum and improve instructional practices. The result is a valid change in what is taught and what is learned. Monroe maintains a rigorous curriculum and uses a variety of assessments to gauge student learning and progress. Assessments determine the need for remediation, re-teaching, or adjustments to the curriculum.

## Recommendations

**In this section, the Team lists any recommendations to the school 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 is not required to accept or act on them.**

**The Visiting Team recommends:**

- Monroe Township High School is currently in transition to using Schoology as the online learning platform. The school should continue to pursue this move as many students, teachers, and parents expressed frustration at not knowing which classes were using other platforms.
- Several common area spaces, such as the media center and the common area in front of the cafeterias were being used as classroom spaces. This may affect the learning ability of students and the negative results show up in academic assessments. Classroom-style learning must take place in classrooms.
- A unified learning management system to support communication for all stakeholders is the one significant need for improving the Assessment and Evidence of Student Learning Standard.

## 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’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 does not meet and, therefore, must be added as a stipulation to the school’s accreditation.**

No.	Requirement of the Standard or Indicator	Recommended Action
X	NONE	

## STUDENT SERVICES STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION

*(Indicators 10.1-10.34)*

**The Standard:** The school provides student services that are effective, appropriate, and that support student learning and achieving the school’s Mission. The services are well-planned and well-delivered, and they are an integral part of and contribute to the school’s educational program. Services are delivered by qualified personnel, sufficiently financed, and evaluated periodically for their effectiveness. Services comply with any requirements of the civil authorities of the jurisdiction(s) in which the school is located.

### A. THE VISITING TEAM'S ASSESSMENT OF THE SCHOOL'S ADHERENCE TO THIS STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION

X	It is the Visiting Team's assessment that the school <b>MEETS</b> this Standard for Accreditation.
	It is the Visiting Team's assessment that the school <b>DOES NOT MEET</b> this Standard for Accreditation. The evidence that supports this assessment is shown in the Recommended Stipulations shown 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	X
Results of follow-up studies of graduates	X
Policies related to student services, including guidance and counseling, admissions, transportation, food services, and special education	X
Admissions criteria (if applicable)	NA

### C. THE VISITING TEAM'S OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Observations

**In this section, the Team lists 1) any general observations regarding the degree to which the school meets this Standard and/or its Indicators of Quality and 2) any areas in which the school exceeds the requirements of this Standard and/or its Indicators of Quality**

**The Visiting Team observed that:**

- The Monroe Township Student Service Staff is composed of guidance and counseling staff, a child study team, special education services, instructional aides, food and transportation services.
- There are 7 guidance/college/career counselors. They provide a wide array of assistance ranging from the traditional (class scheduling, career and college orientation) to individual student counseling. The current ratio of counselors to students is 350 to 1. It is an effective and well functioning department, but as one counselor said, “There is always room to do more.”
- A myriad of services is provided to the 90% of Monroe students who will attend college (AP, AVID, STEM) as well as the students who will go into a career directly after high school (e.g. culinary career, cabinet making, TAP). The Team was a great College Fair during our visit with over 100 exhibitors including 2 and 4 year schools, trade schools and the military.
- The guidance department also teaches NAVIANCE to students and parents starting as early as middle school. They communicate with students and parents through a variety of means such as one-on-one-meetings, Genesis, emails, e-calls, announcements, newsletters, the school website and the marquee.
- The Intervention and Referral Services committee meets weekly with selected teachers, CST members and one VP to evaluate students who have been identified by classroom teachers as underachievers.
- The counselors are proud that “the department has expanded its offerings to cater to college, workplace and the individual needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century student.” The latter statement is directly at the heart of the Monroe Mission Statement.
- The special education population is increasing at Monroe. Currently there are 40 special education teachers and over 25 instructional paraprofessionals and aides. The reputation of the Monroe Township High School special education program is so well-known that families have moved into the community so that their children could attend the school.
- Students are provided with the opportunity for occupational, speech and physical therapy. Psychology counseling is also available.
- The MAPS program is provided for students who are academically in the average range but need additional emotional support.
- METZ is the contracted food service. The FDA evaluated the operation and awarded the operation with a Best Practice for Child Nutrition award. A growing concern is how to handle the growth in student population. There are now 2 cafes serving 700 students per lunch for 3 lunch periods.
- District busing is available to all students. No students are permitted to walk to school. Student autos on campus are a senior only privilege. The school transportation arm recently earned a Best Fiscal Practices award for the most efficient transportation in the county.
- The Visiting Team saw an extremely positive relationship between the Monroe student services cadre and the faculty and administration. This is the fruit of hard work, dedication, and respect for the student body.

**The Visiting Team determined that the school exceeds the expectations of this Standard in the following ways:**

- While the Visiting Team was impressed with all classroom observations time allowed us to make, we were move by the staff efforts and determination shown in the special education rooms and by the department itself. The Monroe special education program runs efficiently, humanely and with love by the professional and paraprofessional staff. Our Visiting Team thanks you and congratulates you!

## Recommendations

**In this section, the Team lists any recommendations to the school 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 is not required to accept or act on them.**

### The Visiting Team recommends:

- This is a school that intends to send the majority of students to colleges and universities. Therefore, we recommend that student services utilize heavily post-graduate surveys to track the success of Monroe graduates (or the lack of it) at the college level. Statistically balanced, professionally developed surveys are available from professional organizations and online from a variety of good sources. Reliable follow-up surveys are a useful tool for real time high school curriculum analysis.
- Based on conversations with stakeholders, the Team encourages reviewing the role of the guidance counselor in modern education to avoid overburdening. Consider delegating certain duties of an academic nature (ex. AP) to department coordinators or other administrators.
- The administrator must evaluate the number of students the counselors have as their case load. We believe this is especially true in light of the increasing enrollment and the challenges facing our youth as they move through our high schools.
- Parent and school communication is a common problem in all high schools. Despite Monroe’s reaching out to parents by various means, the school is only partially successful per stakeholders’ comments. We support a continued study of this issue during the length of the new protocol.
- Study and ameliorate the traffic situation outside the school at the beginning and end of the school day and/or seek methods to convince parents to allow their children to use the district bus system.

## 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’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 that the school does not meet and, therefore, must be added as a stipulation to the school's accreditation.

No.	Requirement of the Standard or Indicator	Recommended Action
X	NONE	



## STUDENT LIFE AND STUDENT ACTIVITIES STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION (Indicators 11.1-11.19)

**The Standard:** The school provides non-discriminatory student activities that are age- and developmentally appropriate and that supplement and enhance the school’s educational program. A balance of academic, social, co- or extracurricular and service activities is maintained. Student activities are designed to foster intellectual, cultural, and social growth and physical health and wellness. Activities provide opportunities for student leadership and social interaction, encourage development of student interests, and, when appropriate, family involvement. Activities are adequately financed, periodically reviewed for their effectiveness, and appropriate for the school’s mission.

### A. THE VISITING TEAM'S ASSESSMENT OF THE SCHOOL'S ADHERENCE TO THIS STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION

X	It is the Visiting Team's assessment that the school <b>MEETS</b> this Standard for Accreditation.
	It is the Visiting Team's assessment that the school <b>DOES NOT MEET</b> this Standard for Accreditation. The evidence that supports this assessment is shown in the Recommended Stipulations shown in Section C, below.

### B. EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT THE TEAM'S ASSESSMENT

Evidence	Visiting Team
Data from Observations and Interviews	X
Samples of student publications—e.g., yearbook, student newspaper, literary magazine	X
Budget for all athletic activities	X
Budget for all non-athletic activities	X
Policies on academic eligibility	X
Policies related to student life and student activities	X
<b>For boarding schools</b>	
Description of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Programs to develop healthy relationships with adults</li> <li>● Plan for continuous and responsible supervision by responsible adults</li> </ul>	NA
Descriptions of	NA

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Provisions for student privacy</li> <li>● Recreational programs</li> <li>● Provisions for religious practice</li> </ul> |  |
|--|--|

## C. THE VISITING TEAM’S OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Observations

**In this section, the Team lists 1) any general observations regarding the degree to which the school meets this Standard and/or its Indicators of Quality and 2) any areas in which the school exceeds the requirements of this Standard and/or its Indicators of Quality.**

#### The Visiting Team observed that:

- Monroe Township High School offers a wide variety of clubs, honor societies, community service activities and sports. Student participation is high and is encouraged by the administration as well as by motivated faculty members and coaches. The Self Study listed roughly 70 activities from which to choose. The programs are consistent with the Monroe Mission Statement which seeks both “cognitive and personal growth” in the Monroe High students. The activity program addresses the cognitive, affective, social, humanistic and physical aspects of a student’s life.
- Students are pleased with the variety of activities offered and are well aware of the procedure for starting a new club. A student said this about the school’s course offerings and extracurricular programs: “You can be anything you want to be at Monroe Township!”
- Financial needs do not hinder students from inclusion in any of the activities offered by the school as club moderators, parents, and teachers all felt that the interests of the students were “very well supported in the school’s budget.”
- While not a graduation requirement, community service is required (30 hours) to be considered for the National Honor Society.
- Most if not all school activities have a social media presence which seems to be used more for internal information and/or the celebration of an event. It is unclear how much the community looks at the school’s media posts on Twitter, Instagram, etc.
- Busses are available after school on Tuesdays and Thursdays to take home students who participate in clubs.
- Some clubs, particularly DECA and FBLA, are thriving while others are having difficulty drawing in members with regularity. At present the clubs with competitions and field trips attached are those that are doing well.
- Student accomplishments are recognized at Monroe in a number of ways (daily TV news report, social media, marquee, school website).
- The school has added new sports teams to its list of offerings regularly over the last few years.
- A non-discriminatory atmosphere exists between students who participate in sports and those in academic/club/service activities. In too many schools, a rivalry exists. That is not the case at Monroe Township High School.
- The morale of students and faculty is high! Although the failed referendum was a blow at this point

in time, stakeholders remain optimistic about the future of the Monroe operation.

- The Visiting Team has no doubt that the offered student activities contribute to the overall success of Monroe Township High School.

**The Visiting Team determined that the school exceeds the expectations of this Standard in the following ways:**

- Monroe Township High School is a Special Olympics Nationally Recognized School and the Special Olympics of New Jersey “School of the Year.” These plaudits are due to the program known as UNIFIED Sports. Monroe has designed amazing programs to provide opportunity for all of their students. It is a model district for the state in accommodating students of different abilities and intellectual challenges. UNIFIED is a flagship program. Our Visiting Team will proudly wear the gift of the Monroe Unified T-shirt!
- It was a pleasure to speak with the student activity stakeholders at the high school who sincerely care about their students and want the best for them regardless of ability levels. Although there will be challenges in the future due to a more crowded facility, there is little doubt that Monroe will overcome those obstacles and go from strength to strength.

## Recommendations

**In this section, the Team lists any recommendations to the school 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 is not required to accept or act on them.**

**The Visiting Team recommends:**

- Provide guidance to students so they do not become over-committed to extra-curricular pursuits to the detriment of classroom challenges. Monroe is a high performing school with a multitude of interesting activities. At times students will do too much and stress themselves out. Where should this guidance come from? It must come from everyone: teachers, coaches, advisors, counselors, administrators in honest face to face conversations.
- Continue to ensure that both sports and club accomplishments are equally celebrated by the school community.
- Support faculty efforts to develop and maintain clubs to satisfy diverse student interests.
- Build the school’s social media presence within the community. It is clear that school members follow the posts but less clear whether the community outside the school is aware of some of the incredible achievements taking place inside Monroe Township High School.

## 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'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 does not meet and, therefore, must be added as a stipulation to the school's accreditation.

No.	Requirement of the Standard or Indicator	Recommended Action
X	NONE	

## INFORMATION RESOURCES STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION (Indicators 12.1-12.15)

**The Standard:** The school’s information resources are appropriate and adequate in scope, quantity, and quality to facilitate achieving the school’s Mission and delivery of its educational program. The resources are accessible to all students and the staff for use in learning and teaching and to broaden and extend their knowledge and skills. Appropriate instruction is offered to the students and the staff on the appropriate, ethical, and most effective uses of the information resources. Information resources are current and functional.

### A. THE VISITING TEAM'S ASSESSMENT OF THE SCHOOL'S ADHERENCE TO THIS STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION

X	It is the Visiting Team's assessment that the school <b>MEETS</b> this Standard for Accreditation.
	It is the Visiting Team's assessment that the school <b>DOES NOT MEET</b> this Standard for Accreditation. The evidence that supports this assessment is shown in the Recommended Stipulations shown in Section C, below.

### B. EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT THE TEAM'S ASSESSMENT

Evidence	Visiting Team
Data from Observations and Interviews	X
The information resources and technology plan(s)	X
Budget for information resources and technology	X
Information skills curriculum	X
Inventory of information resources	X
Inventory of information technology equipment	X
Policies related to information resources and technology	X

### C. THE VISITING TEAM'S OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Observations

**In this section, the Team lists 1) any general observations regarding the degree to which the school meets this Standard and/or its Indicators of Quality and 2) any areas in which the school exceeds the requirements of this Standard and/or its Indicators of Quality.**

### **The Visiting Team observed that:**

- Technology is a major asset at Monroe Township High School. Monroe pioneered a 1:1 iPad initiative approximately 8 years ago. Based on interviews with students, faculty, administration and other stakeholders, the iPad initiative has been quite successful.
- Students receive an iPad as freshmen. Orientation is done by the technology team and the media specialist.
- Monroe provides access to over 11,000 volumes in the high school library collection. This collection includes hard copy books as well as e-books.
- The school has purchased several useful databases and subscriptions to supplement the print and e-book materials.
- Many teachers no longer use textbooks but rather e-books and internet sources.
- Each classroom is equipped with a projector. The Team was happy to see that most teachers used projectors and other technology to help teach class lessons.
- There are 110 projectors in the building and 60 ELMO projectors used mostly by teachers.
- The media specialist works hand in hand with teachers to help prepare classes for research, projects, and outside reading. Due to limited space in the media center, the media specialist often visits classrooms with carts of books or specialized lessons requested by the teacher.
- There is 1 credentialed media specialist along with 2 information resource support personnel. They are 5 people in technology support. As one Team member said, "They are a busy group!"
- The media center is physically being used for up to 3 classes at a time due to classroom restrictions and the growing student population.
- The school is in a transition stage to the use of Schoology as the main online platform. Google Classroom, Wikis, and eBackpack have also been used in addition to Genesis as the main grade book and report operating system.
- Apple products were selected after input from numerous stakeholders. A "Tech Expo" is held every 3 years as contracts expire. Vendors from various companies present information to the Board of Education, administration and faculty. For the past 9 years, Apple has offered the best deals not only on technology but also professional development workshops.
- The district has a written acceptable use policy for the iPads. It is distributed to all students.
- The media center is located in the central commons area of the high school, an attractive and easily accessible part of the school. Students see the media center not just as a library but also a place where they can work on school assignments, get needed help, or "just relax." The media specialist has incorporated various activities such as completing puzzles or drawing on a whiteboard tables "to help students relieve stress."
- The Team applauds the Monroe School District for providing 21<sup>st</sup> century technology skills in line with the Mission of the school.

### **The Visiting Team determined that the school exceeds the expectations of this Standard in the following ways:**

- The media specialist, along with the faculty, has an excellent approach in focusing not only on the academic qualities of the student but rather the student as a whole. While the media center and technology are designed for students to succeed academically, it is important to realize that high

school students are teenagers who deal with a lot of stress. Having activities such as puzzles or “whiteboard art” may seem minor but it isn’t. It is empathetic. It is an emotional release. It shows that the faculty and administration care about the whole child concept.

- Monroe Township High School must receive the highest praise for the 1:1 program. With all students having access to iPads, learning never has to stop.

## Recommendations

**In this section, the Team lists any recommendations to the school 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 is not required to accept or act on them.**

**The Visiting Team recommends:**

- While the technology is very commendable, several staff members and students felt “overwhelmed” by the change in platforms over the past 4-5 years. As the high school is moving to use Schoology, we encourage the school to stay with the platform for at least 3 years in order to give teachers, students, parents and others time to acclimate to a new platform.
- The media center needs to be used for what it was originally meant to be – a media center. Various permanent classes using the center limit all parties’ abilities to meet their goals. The Team recommends finding classrooms for classes.

## 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’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 does not meet and, therefore, must be added as a stipulation to the school’s accreditation.**

No.	Requirement of the Standard or Indicator	Recommended Action
X	NONE	

## THE PLAN FOR GROWTH AND IMPROVEMENT

The purpose of the self-study and accreditation process is first and foremost to establish whether the school meets the Standards for Accreditation, the fundamental requirement to be accredited. However, establishing that the school has in place the building blocks for a quality school is largely an exercise of looking backward to see what has been accomplished.

The *Excellence by Design* protocol is based in the principles and concepts of strategic planning. Therefore, the protocol requires the school to be forward thinking, not focusing so much on the past and past accomplishments but, instead, focusing on the future—what does the school 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 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.

Developing a Plan for Growth and Improvement involves:

- Establishing a vision for the school by creating or reaffirming a statement of mission.
- Identifying a set of beliefs that will serve as the school's ethical code.
- Developing a profile of the knowledge, skills, and qualities the school expects of its graduates.
- Identifying the areas of student performance that are the priorities for growth and improvement.
- Developing action plans to achieve the performance objectives.
- Monitoring implementation of the action plans.
- Conducting periodic reviews of the progress being made toward achievement of its objectives.

Following are the required components of the Plan for Growth and Improvement:

- A Mission
- Beliefs
- A Profile of Graduates
- Three, four, or five objectives measurable student performance/organizational capacity objectives; at least two must be focused on growing and improving student performance
- One or more assessments for each objective
- Baseline data for at least one assessment for each objective
- Technical approval of the objectives
- Comprehensive action plans to achieve the objectives
- A plan for regular monitoring and review of the Plan (at least once annually)

### A. STUDENT PERFORMANCE/ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY OBJECTIVES AND ACTION PLANS

The centerpiece of the school's Plan for Growth and Improvement is formed by the three, four, or five areas of measurable objectives the school has identified as being the highest priorities for growth and improvement if the school 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's organizational capacity to produce the levels of student performance desired and expected by the school's community of stakeholders. Space is provided below to evaluate the maximum number of objectives. This limited number of objectives is suggested so the school 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 area of our organization's capacity the 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'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. 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 seeks to realize from its Mission, as expressed in its Profile of Graduates. Not only should the objectives be related to the school's Mission, but where there is also a district or system plan, the objectives should be linked to one or more of the district's 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.

Action plans describe the methods the school will use to accomplish its Mission 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 in improvement activities for the next seven years. Action plans should be specific and tell in detail how the school will accomplish its objectives. Action plans should relate directly to the objectives, but they also should be related to the mission.

The Visiting Team examined the action plan(s) for the performance/capacity objectives in the school's Plan for Growth and Improvement according to the criteria for effective action plans.

**Technical Review**

The Team was provided with a copy of the school's approved Technical Review.	<b>X</b>	<b>YES</b>		<b>NO</b>
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**A.1. Objective #1:**

X	This is a student performance objective
	This is an organizational capacity objective

By the year 2027, students at Monroe Township High School will demonstrate improved academic skills and abilities as indicated by improved critical reading and math skills.

As indicated by:

- A. A 3% increase in mean junior SAT ERW score.
- B. A 3% increase in mean junior SAT Math score.

Baseline data year 2018:

SAT Average ERW: 586

SAT Average Math: 697

	YES	NO
<b>Is the objective:</b>		
Closely associated with the exit outcomes for students as expressed in the Profile of Graduates, graduation requirements, and/or performance expectations for the school’s students?	X	
Reflective of the school’s Mission, and supportive of the strategic plan of the larger organization?	X	
<b>Does the objective:</b>		
Include baseline data, and are they logically organized and presented in an easily understood format?	X	
Enjoy the support of the school’s stakeholders as one of the highest priorities for growth and improvement in student performance?	X	
<b>Does the school:</b>		
Have sufficient energy and resources to support the implementation of the action plans and the achievement of the objectives?	X	
Have an effective and efficient way to gather data to assess the progress of the objective?	X	
Is the objective reasonable and achievable?	X	

**What recommendations can the Team offer to the school for any areas evaluated No and/or to improve the clarity and focus of this objective?**

- Monroe Township High School Scholastic Aptitude Test scores are already good but there is always room for improvement. Several students and some parents stated that they spent money on SAT prep courses. The Team recommendation is to make SAT prep part of the ELA and Math curriculums, thereby saving students and families’ money while making the SAT’s part of the learning experience. This could be separate courses or a major part of an English/Math class.
- Strongly encourage the continued use of the PSAT website. It is an effective way to target student skill improvement.
- Continue to identify at risk students throughout the length of the protocol. Target both math and ELA students.

**A.2. Action Plan for Objective #1:**

**In the table below, evaluate the degree to which this action plan meets the criteria for an effective action plan.**

<b>Does this action plan:</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
Include strategies/action steps that are comprehensive in scope?	X	
Include a logical sequence of strategies and/or action steps?	X	
Outline clearly and in detail the action steps to be taken in the first two to three years of the plan?	X	
Include enough activities to ensure that the objective will be achieved?	X	
Address as many aspects of the institution’s programs, activities, and services as appropriate?	X	
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?	X	
Identify the resources required to implement the action steps?	X	
Identify the persons/groups responsible for implementing each action step?	X	
Vary the groups/individuals responsible so that the burden for implementation does not fall on just one or two individuals?	X	
Include clear indicators of success for each action step so the institution knows what action steps have been implemented and with what result?	X	
Establish reasonable timelines for implementing the action steps?	X	

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?	X	
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**What recommendations can the Team offer to the school for any areas evaluated “No” to improve the clarity and focus of this action plan?**

- The Team was impressed by the comprehensive nature of this Action Plan that is “heavy” with Action Steps. Because of the latter, be careful of “front-loading” too many activities and experiencing a falling off of work by the end of the plan.
- Increase the “blind reads” as this is an excellent way of spreading SAT awareness to classes other than English and math.
- Involve the media specialist staff and the media center to encourage more reading and problem solving skills.
- Invest more time in peer tutoring. Service hours could be given to the National Honor Society and other honor groups. Build up the student to student tutoring avenue.

**A.3. Objective #2:**

X	This is a student performance objective
	This is an organizational capacity objective

By the year 2027, students at Monroe Township High School will have an increased knowledge of career preparation skills.

As evidenced by:

- C. A 2% increase in the number of students/staff involved in the AVID program and utilization of AVID instructional strategies.
- D. A 3% increase in the number of students involved in Academic Academies such as STEM.
- E. By 2025 85% of students will complete the career interest profile found on Naviance.

Baseline Data:

- B. For the 2018-2019 school year we have 232 students enrolled in AVID.
- C. For the 2018-2019 school year there are 24 students enrolled in STEM.
- D. For the 2018-2019 school year only 27% of the Class of 2019 utilized the career interest profiler found on Naviance.

	YES	NO
<b>Is the objective:</b>		

Closely associated with the exit outcomes for students as expressed in the Profile of Graduates, graduation requirements, and/or performance expectations for the school's students?	X	
Reflective of the school's Mission, and supportive of the strategic plan of the larger organization?	X	
<b>Does the objective:</b>		
Include baseline data, and are they logically organized and presented in an easily understood format?	X	
Enjoy the support of the school's stakeholders as one of the highest priorities for growth and improvement in student performance?	X	
<b>Does the school:</b>		
Have sufficient energy and resources to support the implementation of the action plans and the achievement of the objectives?	X	
Have an effective and efficient way to gather data to assess the progress of the objective?	X	
Is the objective reasonable and achievable?	X	

**What recommendations can the Team offer to the school for any areas evaluated No and/or to improve the clarity and focus of this objective?**

- AVID and the STEM Academy are success stories, well-oiled curricular programs that are established and praised by all. Parents and students want these programs expanded and offered to more students. These programs grow out of the Monroe Mission and Foundation Documents, ex. preparation for an ever changing world. This is a reachable Student Performance Objective. Clarity and focus of the objective is clear. The only thing to do is to do it!

**A.4. Action Plan for Objective #2:**

<b>Does this action plan:</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
Include strategies/action steps that are comprehensive in scope?	X	
Include a logical sequence of strategies and/or action steps?	X	
Outline clearly and in detail the action steps to be taken in the first two to three years of the plan?	X	
Include enough activities to ensure that the objective will be achieved?	X	

Address as many aspects of the institution's programs, activities, and services as appropriate?	X	
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?	X	
Identify the resources required to implement the action steps?	X	
Identify the persons/groups responsible for implementing each action step?	X	
Vary the groups/individuals responsible so that the burden for implementation does not fall on just one or two individuals?	X	
Include clear indicators of success for each action step so the institution knows what action steps have been implemented and with what result?	X	
Establish reasonable timelines for implementing the action steps?	X	
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?	X	

**What recommendations can the Team offer to the school for any areas evaluated "No" to improve the clarity and focus of this action plan?**

- The expanded use of Naviance is a key to increasing career skills not only for students but for parental awareness of the Naviance program.

**A.5. Objective #3:**

	This is a student performance objective
X	This is an organizational capacity objective

By the year 2027, Monroe Township High School will improve the quality and amount of its communication with its stakeholders including teachers, parents and staff.

As evident by:

- By the year 2022, 100% of staff and students will utilize the Schoology learning management system.
- Increase by 30% the number of staff, students and parents utilizing the school Instagram and Twitter account for school activities and sports.
- Increase by 30% the number of parents and community members who receive monthly Falcon Flier Newsletters.

Baseline Data:

- A. As of the school year 2017-2018 at least 4 different learning platforms were utilized in classrooms. These included Google Classroom, eBackpack, Apple Classroom and pbworks. Students, parent, and staff indicated that it was difficult to find information that was necessary for student success in the classroom. Students reported that moving from class to class with many platforms was challenging and would prefer a more uniform platform. A single platform where parents and students can find all the information regarding coursework and class announcements was suggested.
- B. As of the school year 2017-2018 our current number of followers on our school sponsored Twitter and Instagram pages were 81 Instagram and 121 Twitter.
- C. As of the school year 2017-2018 the Falcon Flier currently has approximately 4000 users receiving the newsletter out of the entire community at large.

	YES	NO
<b>Is the objective:</b>		
Closely associated with the exit outcomes for students as expressed in the Profile of Graduates, graduation requirements, and/or performance expectations for the school's students?	X	
Reflective of the school's Mission, and supportive of the strategic plan of the larger organization?	X	
<b>Does the objective:</b>		
Include baseline data, and are they logically organized and presented in an easily understood format?	X	
Enjoy the support of the school's stakeholders as one of the highest priorities for growth and improvement in student performance?	X	
<b>Does the school:</b>		
Have sufficient energy and resources to support the implementation of the action plans and the achievement of the objectives?	X	
Have an effective and efficient way to gather data to assess the progress of the objective?	X	
Is the objective reasonable and achievable?	X	

**What recommendations can the Team offer to the school for any areas evaluated No and/or to improve the clarity and focus of this objective?**

- None

**A.6. Action Plan for Objective #3:**

<b>Does this action plan:</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
Include strategies/action steps that are comprehensive in scope?	X	
Include a logical sequence of strategies and/or action steps?	X	
Outline clearly and in detail the action steps to be taken in the first two to three years of the plan?	X	
Include enough activities to ensure that the objective will be achieved?	X	
Address as many aspects of the institution’s programs, activities, and services as appropriate?	X	
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?	X	
Identify the resources required to implement the action steps?	X	
Identify the persons/groups responsible for implementing each action step?	X	
Vary the groups/individuals responsible so that the burden for implementation does not fall on just one or two individuals?	X	
Include clear indicators of success for each action step so the institution knows what action steps have been implemented and with what result?	X	
Establish reasonable timelines for implementing the action steps?	X	
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?	X	

**What recommendations can the Team offer to the school for any areas evaluated “No” to improve the clarity and focus of this action plan?**

- The different learning platforms now in use at Monroe must be winnowed down to one platform. The strategies to do so are comprehensive in scope. The main challenge in this area will be with parental understanding of the new platform – Schoology. Extra energy and resources must be used in this area such as more parent familiarization classes with the new platform.
- Too many cooks spoil the broth so top down administrative directives may be necessary to move to one system for all.



## B. THE VISITING TEAM'S OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this section, the Team reports its observation and recommendations regarding the degree to which the school's Plan for Growth and Improvement meets the requirements of the protocol.

### The Requirements of the Protocol for the Plan for Growth and Improvement

In this section, the Visiting Team reports whether the school's Plan for Growth and Improvement meets the requirements of the protocol.

Requirement of the Protocol	Met	Not Met
Three, four, or five objectives measurable student performance/organizational capacity objectives; at least two must be focused on growing and improving student performance.	X	
● One or more assessments for each objective	X	
● Baseline data for at least one assessment for each objective	X	
● Technical approval of the objectives	X	
Comprehensive action plans for each objective	X	
Plan for regular monitoring and review of the Plan (at least once annually)	X	

### Observations

In this section, the Team lists 1) any general observations regarding the degree to which the school meets the requirements of the protocol for the Plan for Growth and Improvement (objectives and action plans) and 2) any areas in which the school exceeds the requirements of the requirements of the protocol.

- The Plan for Growth and Improvement is aligned with the Mission Statement and other Foundation Documents of Monroe Township High School. The Organizational Capacity Goal is at the core of the Profile of the Graduates Statement and will clear a better understanding of the technology platform at Monroe.
- The Visiting Team unanimously agreed that Monroe Township High School meets and in many cases exceeds the requirements of the Plan for Growth and Improvement protocol. The Team offers special praise for both Student Performance Objectives because the Action Plans involve a myriad of cross-curricular disciplinary undertakings. Research shows that the cross-curricular goals make students better test takers, better writers and better critical thinkers.

### Recommendations

In this section, the Team lists any recommendations to the school regarding how it can improve the degree to which it meets the requirements of the protocol for the Plan for Growth and Improvement. Recommendations are suggestions by the Team, but the school is not required to accept or act on them.

**The Visiting Team recommends:**

- Make it a priority that clear and specific roles for the Planning Team are established and followed in order to bring the Action Plans to successful completion. Set specific dates and as much as possible keep to them.
- Be careful of “front-loading” planning activities during the early years of the new protocol. Since Monroe strategies are numerous and will involve large numbers of the faculty, spread the work over the entire protocol.
- Have “bench strength.” Vary personnel. Add interested newcomers. If the data takes you elsewhere, follow it. Action Plans are not fixed in stone.
- The Middle States Association hopes Monroe will keep the Action Plans “evergreen.” The planning must be at the vanguard of all professional development work.

**Recommended Monitoring Issues**

In this section, the Team lists any requirements of the protocol for the Plan for Growth and Improvement—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’s accreditation.

Requirement of the Protocol	Action Recommended
NONE	

**Recommended Stipulations**

In this section, the Team lists any requirements for the Plan for Growth and Improvement—Student Performance Objectives and Action Plans—that are absent and, therefore, must be added as a stipulation to the school’s accreditation.

Requirement of the Protocol	Action Recommended
NONE	

## ACCREDITATION RECOMMENDATION

After its visit to the school, and after considering the evidence seen and heard during the visit, the Middle States Visiting Team is charged with making a recommendation to the Middle States Commission(s) regarding the accreditation action the Commission(s) should take.

Based on the evidence presented by the school in its Self-Study Document and supporting documentation, and based on the evidence seen and heard by members of the Team from the school's community of stakeholders, the Team recommends to the Middle States Commission(s) that it take 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 Monroe Township High School proceeds with the implementation of its Plan for Growth and Improvement, there are a number of “next steps” the school 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 schools. The Standards also represent the organizational “building blocks” that need to be in place to produce high levels of student performance. An accredited school 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 using the *Excellence by Design* protocol, it does so with the understanding that the school 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 is required to submit an Annual Profile in which it either confirms or revises basic data about the school. A second requirement is that the school nominates members of its staff to serve on Visiting Teams to other schools.
- **Conduct Periodic Reviews of the Plan for Growth and Improvement**  
While Middle States does not “collect” evidence of the school’s annual review, the school 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 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 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’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 has implemented a planning ethic and the *Excellence by Design* school improvement process has been ongoing as expected, and preparing for the next team visit should be an extension of work already underway.

## SUMMARY AND CLOSURE

### Oral Report

#### Monroe Township High School

March 22, 2019

Good afternoon! I like to start a report with a kernel statement that sums up the mission of the Middle States Association visit but find that too many times the effort reeks of educational jargon, the bane of the profession. So, being an old English teacher I am pulled to literature. Here we go!

“He called himself ‘Cowboy’ but he was from New Jersey. He had grown up among the dye dumps and the brown industrial rivers of Patterson and Passaic. That morning, after we all piled into the car, left Manhattan, and headed for the New Jersey Turnpike, Cowboy asked us, ‘Well boys, do we know where we are going or are we just going?’”

From ON THE ROAD by Jack Kerouac

To the staff of Monroe Township High School, do you know where you are going or are you just going? Do you have a plan, a vision for the future or are you just working daily without a vision for the future and most importantly the future of the Monroe Township students?

If you are interested in the etymology of words, and who isn’t, the word accreditation traces back to an Old French word meaning “believable” or “trustworthy.” Is Monroe trustworthy as a school? Are the things you think you do and say you do in the classrooms believable? In modern parlance, are you for real or are you kidding yourself and the Monroe Township community? The latter is the challenge that faces a Middle States Validation Team.

The Middle States Association directs Team members to come to a school as “critical friends.” We look and listen with discerning eyes as professionals and as friends. What will be offered in my final report will be given in the hope of leaving Monroe Township High School in a better position to help your students achieve academic and lifetime goals.

The entire Monroe staff welcomed my Team. You gave us firm handshakes and straight answers. It wasn’t all positive but we admired your honesty, pride and collegiality. WE salute that collegiality. Never hide it. Never lose it. Front line staffs are the heavy lifters in this business, the grunts and ground pounders that get the job done. If there is success, it is because of the front line. That’s you!

My Team wishes to single out some people for individual recognition: first, the Internal Coordinator, the one and only Internal Coordinator, Danielle Durst. It was so obvious that Danielle was “the point man” (sorry, “woman”), for the evaluation. Her services were described as “being on the highest professional level” by a Planning Team member. Another planner said, “If we were a football team, Danielle was the quarterback.” Danielle provided energy, expertise and enthusiasm to her duties. Please congratulate Danielle on her dedication to the improvement of the school and the student body.

“They have Purple and Gold running through their veins. They believe in us and we believe in them. The administrators’ doors are always open. You talk with them and they really listen. Morale is high.” The latter are student and classroom comments about the administrative team at Monroe High School – Acting Principal Scott Madreperla and his assistant principals. They operate a smooth, safe and positive learning environment at Monroe and maintain an open door policy where students, faculty and staff may bring concerns or solutions to them without fear. The building administration is taking this school in the right direction.

The heart of Monroe High School, the Educational Standard, is sound. Curriculum is constantly updated. A myriad of remediation sources are available to assist student learning. Yes, the Educational Standard is sound. Monroe Township High School is a bedrock public school in the best tradition of the American Public School experiment.

Monroe uses quantifiable evidence to measure educational effectiveness. Daily instruction reflects the Mission, Philosophy and Belief Statement of the entire school district.

The Visiting Team observed staff and student interactions to be fair and respectful. Students repeatedly told us that a characteristic of their school is the level of caring and compassion teachers show them. A student said, “Teacher stay after school to help us even when they don’t have to do so.”

Guidance, counseling, nursing, special education, security, clerical, central office and building administration meet and in many cases exceed their responsibilities in dealing with students, parents, staff and the Monroe community.

“Of course we feel safe here!” Our Team was emphatically told so by Monroe student. The Visiting Team unanimously agreed that we would feel safe sending our children to this high school. That is the highest compliment that can be offered.

The business manager utilizes financial practices that are ethical and follow accepted accounting principles.

Program observations in classrooms evidenced a strong teaching relationship between faculty and teachers. Most classrooms were “alive with student participation and interactions.” Time on task was excellent.

The facilities and grounds “walkabout” found a clean, healthy and positive environment for learning. The Team was extremely impressed by Building Maintenance Supervisor Dominick Tringali. He genuinely cares and takes great personal pride in the physical appearance of the high school and the safety of all stakeholders. Thank him and his crew for their dedication to a beautiful school facility.

The school Mission is thoughtfully written and clearly represents what the Team saw at Monroe. A focus on 21<sup>st</sup> Century learners is manifested in the investment and utilization of IPADS. During classroom observations all Team members noted the high use of IPADS in student instruction.

The district finances are “stable but there is long term risk” due to the recent defeat of a building referendum.

The majority of the faculty agrees that their classroom budgetary needs are met.

Reports and Team interviews indicated that the governing body, superintendent and building administration act ethically and fairly in dealing with students, parents, staff and the Monroe community.

Technology is a major asset at the high school. The school pioneered a 1:1 IPAD initiative 8 years ago. Based on extensive conversations, the initiative has been effective.

Currently, the school is in a transition to use Schoology as the main online platform. Google Classroom, WIKI, and eBackpack have been used in the past in addition to Genesis as the main grade book and report operating systems. Apple products were selected after numerous stakeholder input.

There is one credentialed media specialist with two information resource support personnel. There are five people in technology support.

The Media Center is located in a central commons, easily accessible to all students. Students see the Center not only as the library but as a place where they can work on assignments, get needed help, or “just relax.”

Like everywhere else, the Monroe special education population is increasing. There are over 40 special education teachers and 25 paraprofessionals. The program is so successful “families have moved into the community so that their children may attend this school.”

Café and food preparation areas were spotless, sanitary and well-maintained. The MERTZ staff was friendly and positive in their dealings with the students. Unlike most teenagers, the majority of the Monroe student body expressed satisfaction with food offerings.

Our Team congratulates the school operated Monroe Bus Transportation for recently receiving the Best Fiscal Practices status in the county.

Monroe Student Services provides an impressive array of services and programs to fit the individual needs of the students.

The school offers a variety of clubs, honor societies, service activities and competitive sports. The Self Study listed over 70 activities. These programs are consistent with the Mission Statement which “seeks both cognitive and personal growth for Monroe Township students.”

Although the failed referendum was a blow at this point in time, stakeholders remain optimistic about the future.

The UNIFIED program is magnificent! It is a flagship program. UNIFIED is magnificent!

A most valuable part of our time here was spent with your students. We were touched by their honesty, good behavior, a desire to improve academically and as young adults, and a willingness to share

information. They respect the staff. They respect each other. They are realistic about matriculating in a high performance school and the looming challenges of post high school education. They are proud of their teachers so please show your pride in them. Be that special teacher for the wonderful young men and women of Monroe Township High School.

Speaking as the Team Chair, from the moment I entered the high school lobby I could feel that Monroe was a special place. Vibrant with activity, I was impressed with the level of student and staff involvement in the daily life of the school. This high school connects the key elements of the educational process: children, teachers, parents, the community, sports and extra-curricular activities.

There will also be areas where we will make recommendations and suggest improvements. The final report will go into more details in those areas. Here are some of them and I don't think any will surprise you. They are offered in no particular order.

While the technology arm of the school is commendable, several professional staff and students felt "overwhelmed" by the change in platforms over the past 4 – 5 years. As the high school is moving to use Schoology, we encourage the school to stay with a platform for at least 3 years in order to give all involved time to acclimate to a new platform and use it effectively.

The District Mission Statement found in the Student Handbook and posted on the School Website does not match the newly revised version. Review the documents so that the Mission Statement is consistent in all publications. Publicize the Mission further, put copies in classrooms, reference it by teachers in classroom lectures, and print it in I.D's. Continue to reevaluate the Mission based on the changing needs of the community.

Additional security cameras should be added in under supervised areas or "blind spots." Where are the latter? Ask the students.

Consider the addition of lanyards as part of the student I.D. tags. All students questioned on this recommendation liked the idea.

Give strong financial support to great programs such as UNIFIED, AVID, STEM, AP classes, Project Lead the Way, Falcon Care and others.

Take steps to support the continuity of the current administrative team as they are a professional and cohesive asset to the high school and the district.

In order to achieve all Middle States Performance Goals, the Monroe School Board and Superintendent require future referendum support to maintain the high level of academic programs, quality personnel and high student performance currently enjoyed by the school.

When conditions allow, expand program offerings to include more career readiness activities and vocational-technical life skills.

Monitor class size. While the overall student to teacher ratio appears manageable, teachers at both ends of the academic spectrum felt that smaller class sizes will increase creativity and teacher feedback to



student. For the sake of effective instruction and in the light of the growth of the student population, student to teacher ratios must be constantly examined by the administration.

The social climate of Monroe High School and all high schools is changing: socio-economic issues, stress, anxiety, parent divorce, drugs, alcohol, and the opioid epidemic crash down on our schools. Therefore, the Visiting Team sees a need for an administrative evaluation of staffing in the guidance and counseling areas to address these growing problems. The Team also suggests a reevaluation of the numbers in the secretarial staff of guidance and the high school principal's office to address the increasing demands of the current secretarial support staffs.

The *Excellence by Design* Middle States protocol is an opportunity to develop teachers and all professional staff to take on a more active role in school improvement efforts. The Visiting Team hopes a plan is established introducing more staff to Middle States and strategic planning leadership. The Mid-Term Middle States Progress Visit (3 years from now) and preparation of any new strategic planning documents are logical points to activate this recommendation.

Several common area spaces such as the media center and the common area in front of the cafeterias are being used as classroom spaces. This will affect the learning potential of many students. Monroe must take steps to use classrooms for classroom style learning.

School to parent communication is an issue in schools. Despite the reality that Monroe reaches out to parents by various means, it is only partially successful per stakeholder comments. We suggest the continued study of this issue to improve communication.

Continue to study the traffic flow outside the high school at the opening and closing of school. The Team is aware there have been fender benders. We want to prevent a serious incident. The services of a traffic engineer will show "due diligence" by the district.

Build the school's social media presence within the Monroe community. It is clear that school staff follows the postings but less clear if the Monroe community is aware of the incredible daily achievements taking place at Monroe Township High School.

Support the faculty in their efforts to develop and maintain clubs to satisfy the diverse student interests. Some clubs are thriving while others are struggling. Students should be given adult direction as to which clubs to join and avoid spreading themselves too thin with adverse academic effects.

There is a great national focus on preparing students for university life and while college is a noble path it is not the only path. Encourage vocational-technical, technical, and trade careers to match everyone's God given talent. As the old adage tells us, no man who can work with his hands will ever go hungry.

Monroe has Belief Statements. Middle States has Belief Statements too. We ask that you keep "evergreen" Middle States Belief Statement #6. The latter states that an appreciation of the arts and drama and music elevates the human spirit. It also raises the retention rate and the graduation rate and test score results. It lowers the dropout rate and the incarceration rate and teen suicides. As we design future curriculums, we must never undersell the necessity of these very necessary subjects. The world

really is a stage. We all have our parts to play. There are no small parts. The best teachers in any school are really actors and actresses and music is the dance of the universe.

I am almost at the end of this epistle so one final caveat: this is a demanding school. Take care of yourself. Take care of your fellow staff members, the new guy across the hallway or that veteran teacher on the second floor with 35 service years on her sleeve. Much is expected of you. The road gets long. Take care of yourself. Take care of one another.

My Visiting Team was made up of consummate professionals. I sincerely thank Denise, Brooke, Joseph and Shawn. We considered it an honor to spend time at the home of the Falcons. We leave with a feeling of sadness because you made us feel like we too were part of the great school.

O.K. Cowboy, drum roll! At the conclusion of a site visit, the Team Chair is required to make a recommendation to the Office of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools in Philadelphia dealing with the offering or denial of reaccreditation to a member school. Our 5 person *Excellence by Design* Team unanimously concluded the following:

- Monroe Township High School has a clearly defined Mission, Philosophy and Belief Statement;
- Monroe has established conditions under which the *Excellence by Design* protocols can be achieved;
- Monroe is working toward the achievement of those protocols now;
- Monroe is poised for considerable, measureable and sustained academic growth during the length of the new protocol.

Therefore, we recommend Monroe Township High School for full and unconditional reaccreditation as a proud member of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools.

Congratulations!

Respectfully submitted,  
Frank Radziewich, Middle States Site Evaluation Chair

## VISITING TEAM ROSTER

<b>Role</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>School/Organization</b>
<b>Chair of the Team</b>	Frank Radzievich	Retired Principal
<b>Team Member</b>	Shawn Feeney	Henry Hudson Regional High School
<b>Team Member</b>	Joseph McMenamin	Union County Magnet High School
<b>Team Member</b>	Brooke Oels	Scotch Plains – Fanwood HS
<b>Team Member</b>	Denise Anne Scholz	Bayonne High School