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

The American School in London,
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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-CESS), 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 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

Introduction

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 it 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:

- The Internal Coordinators were extremely well organized in supporting the self-study and the accreditation team.
- The Internal Coordinators were new this year due to a change in coordination after the 2014-2015 school year.
- The Internal Coordinators were well supported by the Senior Leadership teams, educators, parents, and administrative staff.
- All documentation was readily available to the Accreditation Team and the committee meetings were well represented.
- The Internal Coordinators were helpful in answering questions and connecting Accreditation team members to appropriate staff.
- They met regularly and collaborated with the Senior Leadership Team and the Board.
- After sending out the MSA survey in November 2014, the coordinators ensured the committees had periodic meetings with diverse group of community stakeholders starting in January 2015 to review data and create a list of strengths and recommendations.
- The *ASL Portrait of a Learner*, which was created in winter 2015 and finalized in September 2015 and was posted around the school.
- The MSA Student Performance and Organizational Capacity Objectives will be included in ASL's next strategic plan.
- The Academic Leadership Team and the Senior Leadership Team will be responsible for measuring the progress of the Student Performance and Organizational Capacity objectives.

The Visiting Team recommends:

- The Visiting Team recommends that the Internal Coordinators and others responsible for measuring the progress toward meeting the Objectives remain committed.

B.   The Planning Team

A major commitment the school makes when seeking accreditation is to include a varied 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:

- The planning team was extremely effective at completing the requirements for the self-study and embraced the spirit of the plan for growth and improvement.
- The planning team had a strong representation of the diversity of the community as well as ensuring different stakeholder groups were present.
- The planning team was effective in creating well represented committees that were clear about the self-study.
- The planning team will convene once a year to review progress and report it to the Board of Trustees.
- The Senior Leadership Team will be responsible for measuring the progress of the organizational goals.
- The Academic Leadership Team will be responsible for student performance objectives.

The Visiting Team recommends:

- The Planning Team ensure that the MSA Student Performance and Organizational Capacity Objectives be included in ASL's next strategic plan.

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:

- The Head of School and Board were highly supportive, involved, and aware of the self-study.
- Board members were represented on all committees.
- The Head or Internal Coordinator reported to the Board progress on the self-study during regular board meetings.
- The Internal Coordinators attended MSA trainings and they shared their learning with Senior Leadership teams and committee heads.
- The Senior Leadership Team and Academic Leadership Team allocated time at meetings to ensure they had time to plan and complete self-study work.

The Visiting Team recommends:

- While continuing to work strategically, The Board of Trustees continues to engage in a "noses in and fingers off" approach to the operational aspects of the school's Plan for Growth and Improvement.

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:

- Three of the four current Objectives rose from the 2010 ASL Strategic Plan.
- All Objectives included comprehensive detailed Action Plans.
- The MSA Student Performance and Organizational Capacity Objectives will be included into the school´s next strategic plan.
- The Senior Leadership Team will be responsible for measuring the progress of the organizational goals.
- The Academic Leadership Team will be responsible for student performance objectives.
- The Senior Leadership Team will measure progress on an annual basis.
- Members of the action plan teams of the four objectives will be invited to participate in leading their implementation.
- The Visiting Team observed an all staff meeting that was devoted to one of the action objectives – cultural competency. The professional development session was run by both Senior Leadership Team members and faculty that were involved in the planning of this objective.
- The Head of School will communicate the progress on these Action Plans in its annual report to the wider community as well as other vehicles of communication that include emails, website, and parent meetings.

The Visiting Team recommends:

- Those responsible for overseeing the Action Plans and progress toward achieving the goals remain as committed to sustaining the planning ethic that is clearly evidenced in the current Plan for Growth and Improvement.

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:

- The Objectives will be posted on the school website.
- The Senior Leadership Team will devote time during regular meetings and retreats to the follow up on the Action Plans.
- The Academic Leadership Team will communicate follow up and progress on Action Plans during division and department meetings as well as all school meetings.
- Board will be informed annually about progress on its objectives.
- The Head of School will communicate the progress on these Action Plans in its annual report to the wider community as well as other vehicles of communication that include emails, website, and parent meetings.

The Visiting Team recommends:

- School leadership continue to communicate and promote the Plan for Growth and Improvement and the school's progress for meeting its Student Performance and Organizational Capacity Objectives.

## 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:

- The Senior Leadership Team are embedding the Action Plans within their next Strategic Plan.
- The Senior Leadership Teams have created comprehensive Action Plans to ensure implementation, measure progress, provide on-going feedback, and review progress as well as make revisions if needed.

The Visiting Team recommends:

- School leadership periodically review and communicate progress toward meeting the Objectives in ASL's Plan for Growth and Improvement.

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.

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.

- The Visiting Team observed the Profile of the School's Community, the Profile of the School, and the Profile of Student Performance to be accurate accounts. The team verified the school's account of their history, culture, challenges, and accomplishments to be complete and accurate.

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.

No recommendations.

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.

ASL's Mission to develop the intellect of each student is clearly evident in its Profile of Student Performance.

ASL students perform consistently at or above the Independent School Median Percentile on the ERB Comprehensive Testing Program administered to 4th and 8th graders. Students in

grades 3 - 10 participate in the ERB Writing Assessment Program (WrAP) and consistently surpass Independent School Norms. The Average GPA for graduating Seniors at the school has rose steadily between 2004 and 2010 from 3.082 to 3.375 and most recently, averaged 3.51. 2015 SAT averages were 1328 (out of a possible 1600) and 1997 (out of a possible 2400) demonstrating strong academic achievement on these external college entrance exams. The average ACT score for 2015 was 30. ASL reports indicate that while the vast majority of their students are at or above comparable norm groups, there are academic support mechanisms in place for those who fall below the norm group. Parents confirmed this individualized academic support through personal stories of how ASL faculty had positively impacted their children's academic performance. Additional support may take the form of in-class differentiation, interventions, or specifically targeted support for either learning differences or English language proficiency.

In 2014-2015, between 39 - 58% of students in any given year met the criteria for High School Honor Roll. In addition, 96% of students in both 11th and 12th grade enroll in and pass AP courses with 100% of ASL seniors graduating and attending a 4-year college or university. The list of colleges and universities attended by the Class of 2015 features highly competitive and desirable institutions and include schools such as Johns Hopkins, Duke, Harvard and Yale in the United States, McGill in Canada and Cambridge, King's College, and Exeter in the UK.

There is clear evidence that ASL is successful in developing students' intellectual performance and fulfilling this aspect of their Mission. The student body at ASL is inquisitive, invested, and extremely high performing.

Citizenship performance data shared included attendance, tardiness, and suspension, and expulsion records. Attendance records for 2014-2015 indicate that between 22% and 29% of students in each K-2 grade were absent 10 or more days and approximately 15% of students in each 3-5 grade were absent 10 or more days. Middle school absences exceeding 10 days ranged from 20% in Grade 6 to 69% in Grade 8. High school absence rates exceeding 10 days averaged 20% in Grades 9, 10, and 11 while seniors' absence rate exceeding 10 days rose to 52%. When school related absences are figured into the total, these percentages increase to 60% or higher in each grade with 83% of seniors missing 10 or more days of school.

Less than 10% of lower school students in 2014-2015 showed evidence of excessive tardiness (10 or more tardies per year). During the same year In the middle school, 10% - 15% of students were tardy 10 or more times. Less than 10% of students in grades 9, 10, 11 and 12 showed evidence of excused excessive tardiness and 5% of students (or less) showed evidence of unexcused excessive tardiness.

Suspensions across the school during the 2014-2015 school year were minimal with 2% of Grade 5 students suspended and 1% of Grade 9, Grade 10, and Grade 12 students suspended.

There were no expulsions at ASL during the 2014-2015 school year.

Recommendations

In this section, the Visiting Team lists any recommendations for 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.

- ASL's Mission also indicates a commitment to develop the character of each student and enrich their global perspective. At this point, there is not evidence within the Profile of Student Performance for addressing these two elements of the ASL Mission that also figure highly in *ASL's Portrait of a Learner*. Consequently, the American School in London may wish to follow the following recommendations:
- Collect and share authentic measures related to the ASL Mission and *Portrait of a Learner* which may include:
    - authentic measures of attributes associated with desired qualities of character among ASL students as they progress through the school;
    - clarified criteria related to the desired global perspective among ASL students as they progress through the school.

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:

Mission Statement
Our mission is to develop the intellect and character of each student by providing an outstanding American education with a global perspective.

Our Vision for Excellence

Learning
The heart of our school lies in the dynamic relationship between student and teacher. ASL provides a rigorous program that engages students through inquiry and collaboration. Our dedicated faculty encourages students to think critically, to take risks and to be creative. We challenge students to strive for personal and academic excellence, and we treasure the intellectual, social, artistic and physical development of each student. ASL students are expected to participate actively in their learning and to engage fully in the intellectual life of the School.

Character
We believe that students develop integrity and strength of character by learning to make good choices and by taking responsibility for their actions. We expect ASL students to be kind, honest and respectful of others. We value a strong work ethic, and we seek to instill in our students a sense of optimism and determination in the face of challenge. Our supportive environment encourages students to develop the courage to act independently and the confidence to pursue leadership opportunities.

Community
Respect for individual and cultural differences is a central value of ASL. We celebrate the open exchange of ideas and spirit of inclusiveness that flow from our multicultural community. The active involvement of students, families, alumni, faculty and staff creates the energy and enthusiasm that characterize the ASL experience. Our community participates wholeheartedly in the extensive opportunities found in London, and we are committed to pursuing learning experiences throughout the world.

Service
We believe that service to others teaches young people to be productive and effective citizens, and we challenge ASL students to find passion and purpose beyond themselves. ASL offers meaningful opportunities in the classroom and through service learning for students to participate actively in our school, local neighborhoods, and abroad. We seek to inspire the compassion and international awareness necessary for students to contribute responsibly to the global community.

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

Develop the character, intellect, and global perspective of each student.

What is the means the school will use to accomplish it Mission?

The school will engage an internationalized American style of education to accomplish their mission. Further, through the vision strategies of learning, character education, community engagement, and service, ASL will enhance the means to live its Mission.

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

Broadly and clearly. Most importantly, community members report that the Mission is at the center of strategic and operational decisions. The Mission is visible throughout the school and in ASL publications. The Mission is a consistent reference point by the Board, faculty, and school leadership. The admissions teams assure that the Mission is central to all orientation programs.

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:

ASL's Core Values:

Respect
> We treat others the way we expect to be treated.
> We value diversity of thought and experience.

Responsibility
    We take ownership of our words and actions.
    We fulfill our obligations to ourselves and to others.
Kindness
    We act with compassion.
    We help others.
Integrity
    We are honest.
    We make the right choice even when nobody is watching.
And the Courage to act
    We have the courage to speak up for ourselves and for others.
    We take positive action to make our community and world a better place.

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 school's value statements meet the MSA criteria for beliefs. Each statement is verb-driven and the content is meaningful and substantial. They are precise and succinct and they are not written as commands. They represent universal human aspirations, and they do not imply exclusivity or judgment.

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

Very well. One student shared that ASL has given her permission "to go at things to a deeper level and sometimes I am challenged and I am changed by those experiences." In this, for example, we hear respect, courage, and responsibility. The Board of Trustees and Senior Leadership Teams are value-/norm driven indicating a mature values-oriented team culture. We continuously heard from community members that individuals and groups within the school care about each other, speak openly and honestly, and strive to meet their obligations to each other. In one meeting of faculty, a member said: "We want to make sure that no adults fall through the cracks."

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

They are known and integral to the life and working of the school.

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:

<div align="center">

ASL PORTRAIT OF A LEARNER

</div>

Thinker   We use critical and creative thinking skills to analyze ideas and problems.
           We use inquiry to understand important concepts and questions.

Explorer   We value a sense of wonder and are curious about the world.
           We cultivate our interests and strengths.
           We find passion and purpose in our work.

Collaborator   We engage purposefully with others to support common goals.
           We understand and respect diverse approaches.

Innovator	We seek creative solutions to real-life problems.
	We value mistakes as learning opportunities.
Communicator	We listen, speak and write effectively.
	We communicate clearly with others through dialogue and participation.
	We value the ability to do so in multiple languages.
	We attend to the perspectives of other individuals and groups.
Well-being	We seek a balance of mind, body and spirit as we grow.
	We are conscious of our health in the choices we make.
Respect	We treat others the way we expect to be treated.
	We appreciate our own cultures and personal histories.
	We value diversity of thought and experience.
Responsibility	We take ownership of our words, actions and learning.
	We fulfill our obligations to ourselves and to others.
Kindness	We act with compassion.
	We help others.
Integrity	We are honest.
	We work hard.
	We make the right choice even when no one is watching.
Courage to Act	We stretch and grow by taking risks.
	We are resourceful in the face of challenges and change.
	We have the courage to speak up for ourselves and for others.
	We take positive action to make our community and world a better place.

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 *ASL Portrait of A Learner* is a bold and clear vision for what the school is seeking to help each student become.

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

- This is a work in progress as the *Portrait* was developed in the 2014-2015 school year. It has already been well-socialized and is visible throughout the campus. Values "lessons" happen in classrooms, advisories, and assemblies. The school has begun to look at curriculum development through the lens of the portrait by identifying essential standards that lead to its attributes.

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

THE VISITING TEAM'S 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.

- Continue to integrate the values into the life of the school through print materials, lessons, school events, assemblies, and advisories.
- Continue to integrate the *ASL Portrait of A Learner* into the life of the school. The use of student portfolios driven by thinking and reflection driven by the *Portrait* is a positive step. The language in this document is bold and clear and with continued commitment and creativity to integrate its vision, this will make a difference in the life of the school and the learning of students.

THE VISITING TEAM'S RECOMMENDED MONITORING ISSUES:

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

Requirement of the Protocol	Action Recommended
NONE	

THE VISITING TEAM'S RECOMMENDED STIPULATIONS:

In this section, the Team lists requirements for the foundational documents (Mission, Beliefs, and Profile of Graduates) that are entirely absent and, therefore, the school 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

The Standard: The school has a clearly written and actively implemented statement of mission that conveys the general and specific purposes of its educational program, expresses expectations for quality, and serves as the basis for daily operational and instructional decision making as well as long-range planning. Stakeholders give input into the development of the school's mission and understand and accept it. This document is aligned with the community served and is reviewed periodically by stakeholder representatives.

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

X	It is the Visiting Team's assessment is that the school **MEETS** this Standard for Accreditation
	It is the Visiting Team's assessment is that the school **DOES NOT MEET** 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:

- ASL is a mission-driven school. It has been the starting point for the development of Core Values and *Portrait of A Learner* through a process described as "digging down".
- It informed the 2010 Strategic Plan.
- Stakeholders are proud of the thorough process used in its conception.
- It is seen as an "elegant package" and a strong selling point for the school. Stakeholders described it as "vital" and "vibrant".
- It continues to be the source of debate for stakeholders as it prepares for the next strategic plan. "What does an American education really mean?" "How do we measure global perspective?"

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

- ASL's Mission is communicated widely to the school's stakeholders, prominently visible in the school, on its website and in publications .
- The ASL Mission Statement is fruit of a thorough inclusive process that considered input from all stakeholders

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:

- A scheduled review of the ASL Mission Statement, which is the intention of the school as it prepares for its next strategic plan.

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.

Requirement of the Standard or Indicator	Recommended Action
NONE	

Recommended Stipulations:

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

Requirement of the Standard or Indicator	Recommended Action
NONE	

GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION

The Standard: The school is chartered, licensed, or authorized by a state, nation, or authority that operates in the public interest. The governance and leadership ensure the integrity, effectiveness, and reputation of the school through the establishment of policy, provision of resources, and assurance of a quality educational program. The governance and leadership act ethically and consistently to assure an atmosphere of mutual respect and purposeful effort on behalf of students and their learning. School leaders foster a productive environment for teaching and learning, timely and open communication with stakeholders, and the vision necessary for day-to-day operations and long-term planning.

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

X	It is the Visiting Team's assessment is that the school **MEETS** this Standard for Accreditation
	It is the Visiting Team's assessment is that the school **DOES NOT MEET** 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
For independent, non-public, and proprietary institutions only	X

Names, addresses, and organizational position of the institution's owners	X
Names, address, affiliation of the members of the board of governance	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 Planning Team had a preponderance of well-organized "evidence" to support the self-study that included surveys, policies, procedures, data, minutes, and handbooks. The Board and Senior Leadership team are thoughtfully aligning its strategic plan, MSA Action Plans, and recruitment and hiring of a new Director. They seek to communicate a cohesive vision for school improvement.
- The Board and leadership teams are committed to a "research first, data based decision making" as well as exploring new ways to be more effective.
- They read or study "leadership" books such as Mindset, 5 Dysfunctions of the Team, and Death by Meeting to inform its practice.
- They revisit meeting norms and what are effective practices during the meeting.
- The Senior Leadership Team challenges itself to participate in 3-4 retreats during the year to formalize strategic planning, form goals, and build trust amongst themselves. They also meet weekly to handle tactical and timely leadership issues.
- The Board also seeks professional development for best practices such as working with the consultant, Dick Chait.
- The 25 member Board meets together as a full board 7 times a year on a planned calendar and divides itself into (6)committees to meet periodically to work on specific strategic initiatives such as finance, advancement, buildings, etc.
- The Board and Senior Leadership Team drive toward consensus in their decision making and think carefully about how they are going to communicate their strategic plans to their community.
- The Board has a "nose in, fingers out" approach and exhibit a preponderance of evidence of being a high functioning, committed Board.
- The leadership teams have placed an emphasis on "breaking down the silos" of the different school divisions so that there is a K-12 approach to teaching and learning.

Therefore, the principals are intentionally communicating similar messages at the different divisions.

- This emphasis on improvement and professional development is just not modeled from the Board and Leadership. They invest a great deal of time and resources to PD to support flexible, individual needs of teachers. Roughly 1.5 percent of the budget, PD is built into how they measure themselves.

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

- The Board and Senior Leadership Team are clear about their roles within governance and respect these lines.
- The Board and Senior Leadership Team undertake operational, long range, and strategic planning aimed at accomplishing the school's mission and goals.
- The Board of Trustees exhibits high levels of competence in performing their functions around composition, policy, planning, financial stewardship, and head of school oversight.
- The Board and leadership teams have regular, purposeful meetings that are based on best practice. There are minutes and other clear documentation that support these meetings.
- The Board and Senior Leadership Team provide effective leadership, support, and continuity, including succession planning to ensure stability of the school's leadership.
- The Board is focused on selecting, evaluating, and supporting the head of the school, policy development, planning, assessing the school's performance, and ensuring the availability of adequate resources to accomplish the school's mission.

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 Board and Senior Leadership Team should continue to encourage a culture of growth and change based on best practice.
- The Board and Senior Leadership Team should continue to improve communication with stakeholders.
- The Board and Senior Leadership Team continue the process of "bursting the bubble" and reaching out beyond its community to connect with the local and global population.
- The Board and Senior Leadership Team continue to increase diversity and global

perspectives in the school through board membership, hiring, admissions, curriculum, and student life.

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.

Requirement of the Standard or Indicator	Recommended Action
NONE	

Recommended Stipulations:

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

Requirement of the Standard or Indicator	Recommended Action
NONE	

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLANNING STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION

The Standard: The school uses a collaborative process to develop and implement a written strategic or long-range plan to improve its educational program and services. Plans are aligned with the school's mission and its operational plans, and are focused on continuous improvement of student performance, staff professional and organizational growth.

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

X	It is the Visiting Team's assessment is that the school **MEETS** this Standard for Accreditation
	It is the Visiting Team's assessment is that the school **DOES NOT MEET** 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:

- The school has a strategic plan that is aligned with MSA self-study and its Action Plans.
- There are many Board and leadership systems and procedures in place to ensure a focus on strategic planning.
- The school has created a plan that stems from MSA surveys, school data, and an independent survey from Gallup.
- The Board and Senior Leadership Team have periodic scheduled meetings every year to reflect and adapt their strategic plan on an ongoing basis.
- The Senior Leadership Team has communicated the strategic initiatives and plans to the different stakeholders in meetings, documents, and the work of the school.
- Leadership is reviewing its data sources such as ERB to determine if this test or other ones are a better fit to measure their progress on the adoption of Common Core Standards.
- The Academic Leadership Team plans to look at school data longitudinally in a K-12 and beyond lens.
- They want to reach out to graduates to receive feedback about their educational experience at ASL. This data will help determine if the institution is achieving its mission.
- The school has created Action Plans around curriculum, diversity, writing, and organizational health to improve the students' academic experiences. These plans include updated handbooks, procedures, professional development support and additional staffing and other resources.

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

- The governing body and leadership regularly and intentionally review and adapt the ASL Strategic Plan to meet the school's needs.
- The governing body is committed to a regular strategic planning process that includes an array of stakeholders.

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 leadership should consider using standardized tests that are more aligned with their Common Core adoption and continue to develop teacher analysis of K-12 data about student learning in order to inform instruction.
● The Senior Leadership Team shares celebrations and updates with the faculty on a more on-going basis.
● The governing board and leadership should communicate progress, modifications, and implementation of strategic initiatives in multiple ways and forums.

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.

Requirement of the Standard or Indicator	Recommended Action
NONE	

Recommended Stipulations:

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

Requirement of the Standard or Indicator	Recommended Action
NONE	

FINANCES STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION

The Standard: Financial resources are sufficient to provide the educational opportunities defined in the school's philosophy/mission. The business practices of the school are ethical. These practices promote confidence in the school's ability to manage fiscal and material resources in a responsible manner and follow prescribed budgeting and accounting principles. The majority of resources raised for school purposes is dedicated to the school's 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 is that the school **MEETS** this Standard for Accreditation
	It is the Visiting Team's assessment is that the school **DOES NOT MEET** 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 on-going litigations that potentially could affect the institution's ability to continue operation	X

List of grants and other funding sources obtained in the last calendar year	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
    • Investment
    • Debt
    • Rapid Action Plan
    • Reserves
	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:

- Finances do not drive decisions at the school. The Mission does.
- Since the mid-1990s, ASL has steadily brought financial security, planning, and excellence in execution in a gradual and commendable process of improvement.
- The finance teams have a high degree of confidence that the financial plan – inclusive of a 10 year scope – is well aligned with maintenance, strategic, and master facilities plans.
- The school engages in annual risk analyses and maintains a two-year enrollment reserve.
- The school scored exceptionally well in this area on the Indicators of Quality survey.
- ASL expertise and performance in the area of finances stands out as strength of the school.
- External assessment by auditors of the school's financial planning and effectiveness indicates that the school exceeds its own high standards within this standard.
- Evidence indicates that ASL is well-positioned financially to function well above the resource needs of the school in the near and long terms.
- ASL has a well-demonstrated historical track record of a financial planning ethic.
- Appropriate and updated policies are in place to assure the ongoing financial success of the organization.

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

- Financial planning and the positive results that come from planning are having a tremendous impact on the school. The school is staffed, resourced, and built to live the mission.
- The Board of Trustees and school leadership have effectively worked together, in exemplary fashion, over a long period of time to bring financial security to the organization.
- The way funds are harnessed to support staff and resource programs is exemplary.
- The Development Office is highly effective and Mission-aligned.

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 school has identified communication as an area in need of improvement. This appears to be a challenge and will likely remain a challenge on which school leadership should focus in the coming years. In particular, parents would like to understand the rationale and system for assessing supplemental activity fees. Faculty would appreciate more transparency in the process for assigning departmental/grade level budgets and policy changes.
- ASL leadership should stay on course in connecting decisions to the Mission and Values of the school and work to extend those connections to resource decisions.

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.

Requirement of the Standard or Indicator	Recommended Action

NONE

Recommended Stipulations:

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

Requirement of the Standard or Indicator	Recommended Action
NONE	

FACILITIES STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION

The Standard: School facilities are safe, clean, and well maintained. The physical environment supports delivery of the educational program/services as well as optimal student development and achievement. Facilities are appropriate and adequate to implement the philosophy/mission of the school. They are regularly inspected for effective operation and meet all applicable laws including health and safety code requirements.

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

X	It is the Visiting Team's assessment is that the school **MEETS** this Standard for Accreditation
	It is the Visiting Team's assessment is that the school **DOES NOT MEET** 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:

- The facilities are well-maintained, safe, and secure.
- The facilities meet the learning and activity needs of the students.
- The facilities are differentiated such that there is flexibility for growth and improvement as the school stays on its positive improvement trajectory.
- Furnishings are adequate and meet the needs of ASL's users.
- The totality of the school's infrastructure as an urban school seems well-developed and no concerns stood out for the team.
- There is considerable congestion at entrances/exits and in passage areas at particular times of the day.
- The newly built Community Arts Building has been opened and is fully functioning as a learning space.
- The new underground swimming pool, PE space and above ground playground space will all be completed and open for use for start of year 2016-2017.
- Student work and artwork is visible in hallways and classrooms across the school.
- Many learning spaces are colorful and inviting.
- The new Commons offers a multi-purpose space for gathering and eating.

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

- The school is generous in the way it provisions its physical resources to meet the learning and teaching needs of faculty and students.
- The school's facilities development/master plans are extensive, flexible, detailed, and thoughtful.
- The maintenance/housekeeping team's ticketing system and follow through provides exceptional responsive support to students, faculty and staff.

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:

- Engage the shared concern in maintenance planning and follow-through to assure appropriate monitoring and delivery of quality air.
- Explore options for improving foot traffic flow at particular junction points and passageways, and exit and entrance points.
- Attend to the details of the current projects undergoing change or construction of outdoor play areas, underground PE space, community arts building, fitness center, and HS and MS science facilities.

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.

Requirement of the Standard or Indicator	Recommended Action
NONE	

Recommended Stipulations:

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

Requirement of the Standard or Indicator	Recommended Action
NONE	

SCHOOL ORGANIZATION AND STAFF STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION

The Standard: The school's organizational structure and climate facilitate achievement of its core values as expressed in the philosophy/mission. The school culture supports successful implementation of age- and developmentally appropriate educational programs and services. Roles, responsibilities, expectations, and reporting relationships are clearly defined. Administrative, instructional, and support staff are qualified, competent, and sufficient in number to effectively provide quality educational experiences. The school regularly conducts staff performance appraisals and offers professional development opportunities informed by its philosophy/mission. Relationships among the staff and leadership are collegial and collaborative.

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

X	It is the Visiting Team's assessment is that the school **MEETS** this Standard for Accreditation
	It is the Visiting Team's assessment is that the school **DOES NOT MEET** 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 (of admin. And associates)	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 (Appraisal)	X
Professional development plan (Professional Growth Policies)	X
Policies related to school climate and organization	X
ASL Teaching Standards	X
Faculty Handbook	X
Psychological Support for ASL employees	X
Job Descriptions (to be updated)	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:

- Students feel supported by the organization and the teachers, who "are invested in knowing us as people" and where independence is pushed. "You practice time management, develop your ideas and pave your path."
- Students feel recognized for their accomplishments "When students recognize students it is really meaningful."
- Parents perceive leadership as "doing a great job to find faculty" and teachers are viewed as "compassionate" while challenging students academically yet giving them support.
- The visiting team heard parent appreciation for teachers and regret "for losing great faculty to the cost of living".
- There is increasing cultural diversity in faculty and staff, who exhibit a sense of pride in the all-embracing Cultural Competency action plan.
- Team leaders and department heads receive in-house leadership training to enhance their ability to coordinate the school's educational program.
- Well-articulated Teaching Standards have been established and published in the school wide *Teaching and Learning Handbook.*
- There is a commitment to providing targeted professional development for faculty and

staff, in line with goals for the school, much of which is offered onsite. Professional development includes Diversity Training, Curriculum Mapping and Standards, Writer's Workshop and Conferring, Standards-Based Assessment and financial support for university courses.

- The school's senior leadership is attentive to the results of climate surveys, using the results to inform its action plan on Organizational Health. This action plan is the result of "digging down into the data", from the collaborative and thoughtful work of the School Organization and Staff Standard committee, and the close collaboration between senior leadership and the faculty and staff associations.
- The school has committed to updating and publishing job descriptions for faculty and staff.
- There is awareness among students, faculty and leadership that the ASL Student Code of Conduct, "needs clarification on some points". One student suggested forming "a focus group of students and faculty to create a balanced approach."

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

- Leadership, faculty and staff are highly skilled professionals committed to student learning and school improvement. They are passionate about what they do. They model for students the qualities in the *ASL Portrait of A Learner*.
- There is a sense of pride in working at ASL, "The best place I've ever worked."
- There is "the courage to identify weakness and work towards strengthening them."
- The Board of Trustees is sensitive to the cost of living for workers and are very responsive. "While our requests are prudent, the board surprises us, and goes to the limit or beyond:"
- Orientation and mentoring of new staff members is of a very high quality, "The best I've ever seen" reported one teacher.
- ASL has a strong support from the community in times of "personal difficulty" and the school is very helpful to staff who are parents of children at the school, providing babysitting services for meetings.
- There is a sensitivity to staffing needs for program support, and administration is proactive in providing additional staffing when it is required.

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 that:

- The school continue to find ways to clarify the Code of Conduct for students.
- ASL explore ways to promote consistent professional feedback to all administration, faculty and staff and systemize student feedback.
- The school leadership, faculty and staff explore ways to continue to collaborate, communicate and support each other as a learning community.
- Provisions are made for continuing to develop opportunities for faculty leadership.

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.

Requirement of the Standard or Indicator	Recommended Action
NONE	

Recommended Stipulations:

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

Requirement of the Standard or Indicator	Recommended Action
NONE	

HEALTH AND SAFETY STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION

The Standard: A safe, orderly, and healthy environment for teaching and learning is provided. The school adheres to local, state, and federal government health and safety requirements. Health, safety, preventive/emergency procedures, and crisis management policies are clearly written, well documented, implemented, and updated regularly.

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

X	It is the Visiting Team's assessment is that the school **MEETS** this Standard for Accreditation
	It is the Visiting Team's assessment is that the school **DOES NOT MEET** 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
Nurses Handbook	X
Health and Safety Policy	X
Emergency Notices: ● Emergency Procedures ● Evacuation bags Info ● Bomb checklist ● Substitute Teachers and Guest Notice	X
Fire Assembly Map	X
Fire Sweepers and Sweeper Plan	X
Fire Evacuation Reports (Example) and Fire Extinguisher Checks & training	X
Fire Risk Assessments 2014-2015	X
Daily Fire and Health and Safety Observation Forms (Examples)	X
DSE- Risk Assessment Information	X

Owen David Risk Assessment Presentation	X
Risk Assessments (Examples)	X
Accident Report Forms (Examples)	X
Expectant Mother Forms (Examples)	X
Display Screen Equipment (DSE) & Outcomes	X
Crisis Management Team Information	X
Department of Education Information	X
Owen Davis Health and Safety Audit 11/3/15	X
ASL Security Policy & Letter from Head of School on Loudon Road Closure	X
Child Protection Policy	X
Safe Working Practices	X
Health and Safety Procedures Manual ww.asl.org/page.cfm?p=5434	X
Middle School Code of Conduct	X
High School Code of Conduct (policy on violence, substance abuse & weapons)	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 school does an excellent job keeping the entrance/exit secure in a subtle manner that does not create a sense of fear.
● The flow of students in and out of the school is smooth; however not all HS students swipe their cards as they enter during the morning rush.
● Parents have access to the school at all times and do not need an appointment to enter learning areas. One parent confirmed this and stated that "I am always asked, can I help you" by passing teachers.
● The security committee has updated the safety procedures in light of recent world events. New structures have been put into place to protect the entrances, and the school is considering further measures to increase the security of the entrance.
● The security committee has demonstrated much forethought in protecting students both on and off campus. For example, all buses used for field trips have a GPS tracking system, video camera and numbers painted on the roof exterior to allow for easy tracking.

- Closed circuit cameras are not present in the hallways.
- Some adults in the building were observed without security badges.
- Students were observed wearing goggles and aprons during science labs.
- The high school hallway was at times cluttered with students and unaccompanied backpacks making it hard for others to pass and potentially impeding an emergency exit.
- Several middle school students mentioned that the limited hallway space was a problem as the crowds in the high school kept them from getting to class on time (one student referred to this crowd issue as "hug walkers")
- After lunch, there was a good amount of trash left behind in the high school area around the stairs.

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

- The Security Committee has done a phenomenal job keeping the community safe without making overt measures that could cause a sense of fear amongst the community.
- The Security Committee is well connected and supported by the U.S. Embassy and supported by highly reputable consultants to ensure the safety of all community members when they are under the school's care, both in and off campus.
- A detailed risk analysis was conducted by the ARUP group which led to an increase in the level of security in relation to an array of unpredictable threats.

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 Visiting Team encourages the school to keep the hallways clear of backpacks and other clutter that could impede an emergency exit or the normal passage of students.
- To maximize safety, it is recommended that all adults in the building be required to wear identification badges.
- Continue to be vigilant about creating systems for emergency contact of all HS students and staff who have off-campus privileges.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION

The Standard: An effective educational program for a school consists of both carefully planned and well executed curriculum programs and solid instructional pedagogy. Also fundamental to a successful educational program are the means to assess student performance and growth as well as programmatic evaluation. Thus, curriculum, instruction, and assessment are often considered to be the "heart" of any school since these three components have such an impact on the total school experience of students. The curriculum outlines what students should know and be able to do. Instruction identifies effective ways for teachers to ensure student learning takes place. Assessment indicates at what level students are able to demonstrate knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

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

X	It is the Visiting Team's assessment is that the school **MEETS** this Standard for Accreditation
	It is the Visiting Team's assessment is that the school **DOES NOT MEET** 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
Written curriculum guides for each component of the educational program	X
Master schedule	X
Policies related to educational program	X
Curriculum Maps on Atlas Rubicon	X
Unit Planning Templates	X

Standards & Philosophy Statements	X
Relevant Action Plans	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:

Educational Standards
- ASL has undergone a multi-year process for aligning each subject areas' curriculum to comprehensive K-12 common core standards.
- An integrated Technology & Information Literacy plan includes comprehensive K-12 standards.

Curriculum Review, Alignment and Articulation
- The curriculum review process allows for each subject area to be thoroughly reviewed every four to five years.
- The school is in the midst of aligning all subject areas to comprehensive K-12 standards.
- A detailed curriculum review process is used across the school and described in the *ASL Teaching and Learning Handbook*.
- Processes for horizontally aligning curriculum are in place via grade-level team leaders and heads of department.
- A school-wide curriculum mapping initiative is underway to ensure vertical articulation and all-faculty access to the school's curriculum
- The school recognizes different division's ability to tackle multiple curriculum reviews and adjusts pace and support accordingly.

Curricular Communication
- Grade level guides are available to all school stakeholders via the school's website.
- Semester-specific curriculum guides are printed and made available to parents in the Lower School.

Integration of Critical Thinking, Reasoning, Problem-Solving and Study Skills

- Teachers across the school engage students in activities which promote critical thinking and problem-solving. Activities of note included strategy-infused instruction, reflective conversation, constructivist-based tasks, and the Harkness Method.

Integration of Technology
- ASL contracted an outside consultant to audit the school's tech program, offer recommendations for enhancing its impact on student performance, and providing professional learning to faculty and staff. ASL has worked toward designing a school-wide vision and definition for technology and information as well as a comprehensive K-12 set of ASL Technology, Information Literacy & Media (TILM) Standards and Benchmarks.

Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)
- Authentic SEL opportunities were observed in classrooms across the school. In the lower school, *Responsive Classroom* morning meetings enhanced social engagement while in secondary classes, students were observed speaking passionately about feelings and emotions.

Differentiation and Learning Support
- A variety of learning formats, styles, and approaches were observed with students benefitting from teachers' skill at responding to individual needs. The SLD (Specific Learning Difficulties) program has extensive policies and procedures for maximizing their team's benefit to students.

Early Childhood/Elementary Program
- A student-centered approach to delivering a holistic educational experience was noted throughout the early childhood classrooms.
- Daily play is included as part of the day in early childhood classes, as noted in the Education Program timetable.
- An inquiry-based integrated educational stance is clearly evident in all classrooms observed.
- Early childhood classrooms are inviting places for learning, with colorful displays and areas for exploration and discovery.
- Reggio-inspired areas for engaging in art, music, movement, and dramatic play allow for self-expression and creativity.
- Project work in content areas provides avenues for student-inspired inquiry.
- Resources are plentiful, including books, arts supplies, and instructional materials.
- A "Home Learning" approach offers students opportunities for authentic after-school experiences that include daily reading, unstructured play and passionate pursuits.
- World Language FLES programs allow for students to gain communication skills in Spanish.

Secondary Program

- Middle school classrooms are student-centered, allowing for self-expression.
- An ensemble approach to music education is provided to all middle school students.
- World Language programs in Chinese, French, and Spanish allow for students to appreciate culture and learn to communicate in other languages.
- Many classrooms featured student talk as a centerpiece for instruction, with students taking on leadership roles.
- Observed instruction included simulations, labs, student-to-student interaction and Harkness Method: tasks that were engaging and that promoted higher level thinking.
- Students are given opportunities to explore arts, athletics, and other personal passions.
- The High School features a Mindfulness Room designed for students.
- The school will open a K-12 Maker Space in August 2016 to promote student-inspired inquiry.

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

- Teaching and learning at ASL is clearly at a high standard across the school. Teachers are committed to engaging students in daily classroom experiences that are rich and varied, and students are actively invested in their own learning processes.
- The school's educational program is holistic and student-centered. Its offerings are rich for students of all ages, learning styles and developmental stages, and opportunities exist for students to pursue passions within and beyond academic areas.
- The school's methodical and intentional approach to curriculum review and revision provides the necessary framework for sustained examination of all aspects of teaching and learning within each subject area. An ongoing focus on alignment is providing the school with a new-found coherence within its educational program. In addition, the focus on clearly-defined Action Plans that rise from the review process allows for teachers to sustain momentum for curriculum development.
- An intentional focus toward building a K-12 school rings loud and true across the school's educational program goals. Building cohesive Action Plans across the three divisions has allowed for leaders, faculty, and staff to take advantage of the tremendous internal expertise to the benefit of all.
- The purposeful integration of ASL's Strategic Plan, the MSA's Plan for Growth & Improvement, and the school's ongoing goals and objectives provides a clearly-articulated pathway forward.

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:

ASL's commitment to continuous improvement in teaching and learning across all educational programs is clearly evident on paper and in practice. There is clear attention given to continually strive toward integrating the school's Plan for Growth and Improvement into the daily learning experiences for students. With this mind, the MSA Visiting Team recommends that the ASL leaders, faculty, and staff:

- Realize the full potential for your *Portrait of A Learner* as it lives within the ASL Educational Program by:
    - Developing "look fors" related to desired capacities for students, faculty, staff and parents;
    - Deepening the common language related to the *Portrait* across the school;
    - Ensuring its deep integration into both written curriculum development (via Atlas Rubicon) and instructional practices;
    - Strengthening its sustainability through deliberate role modeling by faculty;
    - Maximizing the strength of the *Portrait* as a decision-making filter for educational programs;
    - Celebrating stakeholder actions that model the attributes of the *Portrait.*
- Encourage leaders, faculty, staff, students and parents to celebrate innovation and inquiry by modeling open-ended learning experiences and "the courage to fail" within the process of learning;
- Continue to explore ways to enhance authenticity in assessment across the school and infuse critical thinking into daily learning experiences;
- Deepen the school's transformative work in the areas of cultural competency through the infusion of a global perspective and anti-bias framework into the written and taught curriculum;
- Continue focus on diversity across the school and consider avenues for enriching ASL's educational program to embrace international mindedness;
- Fulfill the promise to school stakeholders of a fully articulated and aligned K-12 curriculum through the *Atlas Rubicon* mapping project;
- Remain fully focused on the prioritized curricular areas that are highlighted in the Plan for Growth and Improvement as a means to fully meet desired goals;
- Continue to seek out appropriate and relevant faculty and staff professional learning for the long-term curriculum and instructional practice work ahead;
- Remain responsive to the overall responsibilities and workload of teachers, and recognize that Action Plan timelines may need to be revised to ensure a fully realized goal. Give yourselves the gift of time and focus to ensure that this important work becomes more than task completion.

- Continue to focus on collaborative learning among faculty, staff, and students as the single most powerful vehicle for maximizing internal expertise and building capacity within the school;
- Maintain your laser-like focus on learning, always putting it in its rightful place at the center of every conversation.

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.

Requirement of the Standard or Indicator	Recommended Action
NONE	

Recommended Stipulations:

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

Requirement of the Standard or Indicator	Recommended Action
NONE	

ASSESSMENT AND EVIDENCE OF STUDENT LEARNING STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION

The Standard: The school systematically collects and rigorously analyzes quantifiable and observable evidence of individual learning and growth from multiple valid and reliable sources. Evidence of student learning is used to evaluate and improve curriculum effectiveness, instructional practices, professional development, and support services. Progress in student learning and performance is expected and is accurately, clearly, and systematically reported to the school community.

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

X	It is the Visiting Team's assessment is that the school **MEETS** this Standard for Accreditation
	It is the Visiting Team's assessment is that the school **DOES NOT MEET** 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
Handbook pages related to assessment	X
Action Plans related to assessment	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:

School-Wide Vision for Assessment
- ASL has published a *Teaching and Learning Handbook* that serves as a visionary document for establishing a common definitions, success criteria, policies and shared expectations for practices related to assessment.
- An established set of *ASL Teaching Standards* includes clear indicators and a rubric for determining teacher use of effective assessment practices.
- The school plans to implement a standards-based assessment system in all divisions.
- The school plans to assess the student′s growth in cultural competency.

External Standardized Assessments
- Reliable external standardized assessment data (ERB-CTP Grades 4 & 8; WrAP-Grades 3-10; IPT(WIDA)-Grades K-10; STAMP- Grades 5+; SAT/ACT- Grades 11-12 ; AP Exams-Grades 10-12) are gathered, analyzed and shared with teaching teams.
- Parent meetings related to the interpretation of external standardized assessments are held after testing has occurred.

Internal Assessment Practices
Lower School
- Literacy Assessments (*TCRWP*) are administered three times a year to students in grades K-4.
- On-demand writing assessments are given in conjunction with *Teachers College Reading & Writing Units of Study* in the ASL Lower School.
- Grade level teams regularly reflect on evidence of student learning.
- Vertical conversation regarding progressions of student writing have occurred.
Middle School
- Middle School Literacy Assessments (*TCRWP*) are administered as needed to students in grades 5-7.
- Common assessments in horizontally shared courses have been developed 5-8.
- Vertical conversations related to assessment in writing have occurred in grades 5-8.
High School

- Speaking and Listening rubrics have been developed for use with the *Harkness Method*.
- 8th and 9th grade transition meetings have provided a venue for assessment conversation.

Reporting & Record-Keeping Practices
- The school has defined the purposes of reporting and provide feedback to parents and students through conferences, progress reports, and report cards.
- Parent-teacher Conferences occur two times per year, and formal report cards are sent home in Jan/February and June.
- Middle school and high school students receive progress reports in November and May.
- *Veracross* is used in the Middle School as a learning management system for reporting while *Haiku* is used in the High School.
- The school maintains appropriate records of students' learning across the school.

Professional Learning Related to Assessment
- The school recognizes the need for relevant professional learning related to assessment practice and has consulted with external providers to enhance shared understanding among the faculty.

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

- ASL has a responsive K-12 Specific Learning Differences (SLD) program that provides comprehensive support in a variety of formats for students with learning differences. The SLD program makes use of a robust assessment system for identifying students who might benefit from learning support and monitors their progress with effective assessment tools.
- While its current status is in some areas, aspirational, the intentional and forward-thinking *Teaching and Learning Handbook* serves as a tangible reminder of the school's vision. Its purposeful use as a tool for reflecting on the school's journey toward best practices is testament to ASL's shared commitment to becoming a learning-focused standards based school.
- The school's strong planning ethic has ensured that there are plans in place to continually improve assessment practices and move toward a standards-based assessment system. The school is sensitive to the need for developmentally appropriate practice.

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:

Focus on assessment and evidence of student learning is already ongoing across the school. There are clear Action Plans in place to continue the development of common assessments in all courses and to strengthen the school's capacity for shifting to a standards-based reporting system with their *Written, Aligned Curriculum*. With the faculty fully focused on these school-wide goals, the MSA visiting team recommends that:

- Teaching teams across the school continue their focus on learning through the analysis of student assessments and other evidence as a vehicle for clarifying learning outcomes, responding to learning needs, and informing instruction;
- School leaders consider the current external standardized tests and their usefulness in driving instructional decisions, and explore alternate assessments that might better inform teachers and provide useful feedback for students;
- ASL faculty and staff make deliberate use of the *Teaching and Learning Handbook* as a tool for measuring progress toward achieving the desired goals;
- As the school continues its progress toward uniting the three divisions with standards based assessment system, leaders consider ways to provide more consistent reports and tools. A careful look at the three divisional report cards and different learning management systems (Haiku, Veracross) across the schools might lead to shared language for grading and reporting that would significantly improve communication to parents and students;
- Consider the development of K-12 Approaches to Learning on division report cards that mirror the *ASL Portrait of a Learner* and desired capabilities;
- A fully realized K-12 Standards-Based Assessment System is an admirable and significant organizational goal for ASL. This goal's action plan (*Written, Aligned Curriculum*) is both ambitious and multi-faceted. To fully achieve this vision, it is highly recommended that ASL leaders, faculty and staff build clarity around what such a system will look like, and how they can ensure that all stakeholders fully understand the process and timing for realizing the goal. Recommendations related to the development of a Standards-Based Assessment System might include the following:
  - Be responsive to needs regarding the pacing of the action plan. Consider taking the necessary time to ensure an implementation that results in change that is manageable and sustainable;
  - Clearly differentiate between assessment, reporting, and grading practices, policies, and shifts to ensure clarity among all stakeholders;
  - Ensure that unit-based assessments continue to be reviewed to ensure authenticity and alignment;
  - Be attentive to parent education throughout the process with regard to the shift from traditional assessment, grading and reporting to one that is standards-based;
  - Be attentive and responsive to students, educating them throughout the process with regard to these shifts;

- Maintain a laser-like focus on learning and how students can be engaged leaders of their own progress;
- Leverage the power of learning outcomes by unpacking them to reveal powerful learning targets for use in daily lessons;
- Celebrate steps along the way toward achieving this transformative goal for ASL.

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.

Requirement of the Standard or Indicator	Recommended Action
NONE	

Recommended Stipulations:

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

Requirement of the Standard or Indicator	Recommended Action
NONE	

STUDENT SERVICES STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION

The Standard: The school implements written policies and procedures, in partnership with families and the community, that provide all students with, or refer them to, services that are age- and developmentally appropriate to optimize opportunities for life-long success. Student services are systematic and integral to the educational program. They are provided by qualified personnel, sufficiently financed, periodically evaluated, and philosophy/mission appropriate.

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

X	It is the Visiting Team's assessment is that the school **MEETS** this Standard for Accreditation
	It is the Visiting Team's assessment is that the school **DOES NOT MEET** 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)	X
Samples of student publications: ● The Scroll ● The Standard ● Perspectives ● Jumbalaya Magazine	X
Admissions Policies on the ASL website: http://www.asl.org/page.cfm?p=5809	X
ASL Website: Transportation, Food Services, K-12 Student Support, Admissions, College Counseling	X
Curriculum Maps: Access to Atlas Rubicon	X

ASL 2014 Parent Survey	X
School Calendar	X
College Counseling: eQuill and www.asl.org/page.cfm?p=6067	X
Advancement Office: ● Accents ● Example of Take Note ● Example of Program Notes	X
Students with Learning Differences (SLD) and English as a Second Language (EAL) Description of Services on the ASL website: http://www.asl.org/page.cfm?p=5732	X
K-12 Student Support Services Team Policies and Practices – Internal Document	X
EAL Policies and Procedures and Audit	X
EAL Haiku Faculty Page Examples and EAL Haiku Student Page Examples	X
Sample Student Health Record (health data is confidential and electronic but you could access it with the nurses if necessary)	X
Job descriptions of guidance, special needs and admissions	X
Records of CPR and First Aid Training	X
Process for SST referral	X
Sample IEP from Lower, Middle and High	X
Sample high transcript	X
Guidance counseling services	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:

- Special needs support is well staffed and clearly organized.
- Both students and parents feel that the additional learning services for students are excellent. One parent mentioned that the discovering of her daughter's learning struggles and subsequent support from the school "revolutionized her child's life".
- ASL encourages and supports students as they build on their own strengths.
- Student - "The school looks at each child as an individual and helps them reach their

potential."

- Parent - "Each child was valued for their own gifts in the community"
- A HS student stated that there is no stigma towards students who receive services.
- ASL does not often look to community support services as there is a feeling that American support services are to a higher standard and more timely.
- There is a strong orientation/buddy system to support the integration of new students Existing students are proud to be buddies and would like more opportunities to do so.
- There is an impressive Advisory Council and new Dean System in place that is supported by both staff and students.
- Support services are not advertised by admissions.
- ASL food services provides the community with a variety of nutritious options for breakfast, lunch and snack.
- The dining area is clean and flows well. Alternative locations to eat exist throughout the school.

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

- Services are tailored to meet the needs of individual students and families in everything from special needs and transportation to food services.
- Student learning services have been transformational for many students and their families.
- Transportation service is praised by parents and students for being efficient and the door-to-door service.
- ASL does an exceptional job of welcoming new students and their families to the school community.

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 ASL continues to culturally diversify its student body, the Visiting Team recommends the consideration of appropriate and necessary resources and support.

STUDENT LIFE AND STUDENT ACTIVITIES STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION

The Standard: A healthy atmosphere exists for all students. At all levels, non-discriminatory, appropriate student activities that supplement classroom experiences or community life are provided. An appropriate student activities program fosters a positive intellectual, cultural, and social climate, promotes growth in student leadership and social interaction skills, and encourages students' special interests.

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

X	It is the Visiting Team's assessment is that the school **MEETS** this Standard for Accreditation
	It is the Visiting Team's assessment is that the school **DOES NOT MEET** 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
Extracurricular Clubs and Activities (After School Program)	X
Athletic Information	X
Service Learning Information	X

Advisory Curriculum (MS)	X
Advisory Curiculum Development (HS)	X
Assembly Topics – LS, MS and HS	X
MS Ethics Survey	X
MS and HS Student Council Topics and Minutes	X
LS Rules	X
MS Code of Conduct	X
HS Code of Conduct	X
Safe School Policy	X
Child Protection Policy	X
ASL Standards for Safe Working Practices	X
School Trips Policies and Procedures (available on request)	X
Yearbook	X
Work Experience	X
Student Council	X
Alternatives	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:

- Students expressed satisfaction with the Advisory and Dean programs. "There is always at

least one adult in the building who a student can connect with."
- Ideas for new activities come from both students and teachers.
- There an extensive variety of clubs and after-school activities. If students can't find one that meets their needs, there are channels in place to allow them to create their own.
- No homework (outside of reading) is assigned to elementary students. Students explained that this gives them time to pursue non-academic interests.
- An extensive summer school program serves up to 600 students. Half of the participants come from outside the ASL community.
- The way in which student achievement is recognized has shifted in recent years. Part of the catalyst for this change came after reading Carol Dweck's work on recognizing hard work instead of the final product.
- High school student council members supported that the change, stating that they prefer the new assemblies in which they are able to recognize each other's special talents and unique achievements.
- Students are proud of the music program, specifically the number of instrumental options to choose from.
- Students raved about the HS "Alternatives" trips. Of particular importance to them was having the choice and being able to make friends with students of different grade levels.
- ASL students (MS and HS) defined success as personal growth, independence, trying hard and following their core values. They felt that they measured their own success and that the ALS supports them to do so.
- Middle school student council expressed that learning is fun, and there is a feeling of "free-spiritedness", that promotes kindness and diversity.
- Middle school students reported that they like getting to know other students and would like more opportunities to mingle with students from other grade levels and have all school assemblies.
- Some middle school students felt there was too much competition between grade levels (non-academic).
- The middle school newspaper, *The Scroll*, and the high school newspaper, *Standard*, provide students with a forum for reporting student life events as well as sharing opinions and viewpoints.
- High school Student Council members reported that they would like to bring back student evaluation of teachers.
- High schoolers asked for more transparency from the administration. The stated feeling left out as parents receive updates while they do not.
- HS administration demonstrated a high level of transparency with the students, faculty and parents regarding major disciplinary infractions in a manner that reinforces school values and behavioral expectations.

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

- ASL has an exceptional array of extracurricular activities that appear to meet the needs and interests of all.
- Extensive support systems are in place for students to feel free to express themselves and explore their interests.
- Administration and faculty have empowered the student body to be active participants in their education.
- School values are not just talked about, but lived by students, staff and faculty.

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:

- Continue to explore ways to recognize student achievement in alternative ways (both academic and non-academic) that align with ASL's values and its *Portrait of A Learner*.
- Consider establishing a system by which students can provide feedback to their teachers in an efficient and constructive manner.

INFORMATION RESOURCES STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION

The Standard: Information resources, materials, and technology are accessible and of adequate scope, quantity, and quality to facilitate the school's pursuit of its total educational program. These resources encourage all students and staff to broaden and extend their knowledge and skills. Access to appropriate information resources and technology is provided for students and staff. Appropriate instruction is offered to develop student and staff inquiry, research, and information literacy skills. Information technology equipment is functional and well maintained.

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

X	It is the Visiting Team's assessment is that the school **MEETS** this Standard for Accreditation
	It is the Visiting Team's assessment is that the school **DOES NOT MEET** 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:

- The school has ample hardware and a well-resourced team of librarians and technology integrationists to support the students, educators, and staff in the current spaces.
- The Senior Leadership teams and Information team have noted the need for more written policies and guidelines about the school´s information resources.
- An external consultant conducted a thorough review of the use of technology in instruction and assessment through classroom observations, a survey and focus groups. The results were compiled in an audit by Howard Pitler and highlight that there are issues in the following areas:
  o Lack of shared vision of the use of technology and information literacy
  o Minimal expectations for the use of technology
  o Technology is not frequently being used to create or deepen students´ critical thinking.
- Alongside and in part guided by the affirmation of the audit by Howard Pitler, the school has created plans, benchmarks, and guidelines for the use of technology and information resources.
- The school is in the process of communicating and unrolling the current Technology and Information Plan and systems. This plan is in connection with the MSA Action Plans in both the Writing and Investigation and Written Aligned Curriculum.
- The school has blended library and IT standards to create ASL Technology, Information Literacy, and Media (TILM) Standards and Benchmarks.
- The school's Atlas Rubicon maps include a place for TILM Standards and Benchmarks.
- The School is in the process of developing expectations, devoting time, and preparing training on these resources.
- The school plans to use a multifaceted "co-teacher" model.
- The school plans to move toward common digital platforms (Learning Management Systems) across divisions such as the use of Haiku.
- There is a concern among the librarians about the high level of traffic in the library and need for more flexible teaching space within the exisiting floor plan.

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

- The school has a strong number of highly knowledgeable technology and library staff to support students, educators, and parents.
- Information and technology resources are well supported in the school.

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 school continues to implement its plan related to a systematic approach to using technology and library resources in the school.
- The school continues to communicate its new policies and procedures to target audiences.
- The school clarifies to educators the expectations around the use of TILM in the classroom.
- The staff educate the parents about the recent technology and information resource plan.
  The Senior Leadership teams continue to reduce the number of different platforms in divisions.

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.

Requirement of the Standard or Indicator	Recommended Action
NONE	

Recommended Stipulations:

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

Requirement of the Standard or Indicator	Recommended Action
NONE	

THE PLAN FOR GROWTH AND IMPROVEMENT

Introduction

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

A.1. Student Performance Objective #1

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

By 2023, ASL <u>students will demonstrate</u> greater cultural competency as measured by:

A. Students in grades 10-12 will complete a fifty-question survey, the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) which measures individual attitudes, dispositions and skills and the capability to shift cultural perspective and appropriately adapt behavior to cultural differences and commonalities. The IDI is based on the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMSI), Milton Bennett's model of cultural competency which is the model that ASL has recently adopted. The IDI gives each individual and school results with an individualized growth plan.

Baseline year: Spring 2016

Baseline data: Data gathered in Spring 2016. Desired percentage increase is to be determined based on baseline data. The school has data from a middle school survey adapted from questions in "Promoting School Connectedness: Evidence from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Healthy" McNeely, Nonnemaker, Blum – 2002 and the Josephson Institute of Ethics "Report Card on the Ethics of American Youth". Additionally, we have data from high school survey, High School Survey of School Engagement. We used these to

identify cultural competency as an objective and develop the Action Plans. However, those surveys do not specifically measure cultural competency as we have defined it now. For that reason, we will give the IDI to all high school students and faculty and staff. The IDI must be given by a trained facilitator and the Director of Teaching and Learning will undergo the training in April in Munich to be able to administer the instrument in early May. Based on our results, we will create target goals for our high school students. We will have to decide if we conduct the IDI on a yearly basis or if we select a sample of students from a cross-section of the high school and just use the instrument with them.

B. Alumni will complete a 5 question survey, which measures individual attitudes, dispositions and skills related to the following areas:
- How well they interact with diverse populations post ASL
- Attitude toward others and cultural differences
- Knowledge of other cultural views
- Demonstration of culturally-competent communication skills

Baseline year: Spring 2016
Baseline data: Data gathered in Spring 2016. Desired percentage increase is to be determined based on baseline data. Data will be not available for visiting team. Survey is designed and will be available to the visiting team.

	YES	NO
Is the objective:		
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	
Does the objective:		
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	
Does the school:		
Have sufficient energy and resources to support the implementation of	X	

the Action Plans and the achievement of the objectives?		
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?

- Clarify the definition of cultural competency amongst the members of the diversity team and communicate with staff before collecting baseline data. When ready, establish clear means for collecting data.
- Consider the gathering of data from the entire K-12 student population to fully realize this Objective.

A.2. Action Plan for Student Performance Objective #1:

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

Does this action plan:	YES	NO
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?

- Many faculty members are passionate and dedicated to integrating cultural competency into learning at ASL. Allow time to clarify the meaning of cultural competency and its importance in fostering a global perspective for the ASL community before moving forward with baseline data.

A.2. Student Performance Objective #2

X   This is a student performance objective

         This is an organizational capacity objective

By 2023, ASL students will improve their ability to investigate and analyze meaningful ideas and to express them effectively through written and digital communication forms.

A. An increase in percentage points of all students grades 2-12 meeting grade level expectations for <u>writing</u> in the three genres (narrative, opinion/argument, informational) as defined by the Common Core English Language Arts standards.
<u>Baseline year:</u> Spring 2017
<u>Baseline data:</u> Data gathered in Spring 2017. Desired percentage increase is to be determined based on baseline data. Because we are in the process of fully aligning to Common Core standards and giving common benchmark assessments in the form of on-demand writing, data will not be available until Spring 2017.

B. An increase in percentage points of all students grades 2-12 meeting grade level expectations for <u>research</u> standards in the areas of Social Studies and Science.
<u>Baseline year:</u> Spring 2018

Baseline data: Data gathered in Spring 2018. Desired percentage increase is to be determined based on baseline data. Because the particular research standards from the Common Core ELA Literacy standards in History/Social Studies, Science and Technical Subjects are being integrated, we still have to develop common benchmark assessments and their rubrics (2016-17) and then norm the assessments and determine levels of proficiency (2017-18) prior to determining a percentage increase in performance. Thus, data will not be available until Spring 2018.

C. An increase in percentage points of all students grades 2-12, meeting grade level expectations for <u>digital communication skills</u> as measured by a common rubric.
Baseline year: Spring 2018
Baseline data: Baseline Data will be gathered in Spring 2018. Desired percentage increase is to be determined based on baseline data. The ASL Information Literacy (TILM) standards are being finalized and then, we have to develop common benchmark assessments for digital communication (2016-17) and then norm the assessments and determine levels of proficiency (2017-18) prior to determining a percentage increase in performance. Thus, data will not be available until Spring 2018.

	YES	NO
Is the objective:		
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	
Does the objective:		
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	
Does the school:		
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	

	YES	NO
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?

- There are dates specified for the collection of baseline data for each of the three strategies. The data is at various stages in its collection.
- Clarification is needed regarding terminology. "Investigation" is used in the objective, "Inquiry" is the language of the action steps.
- The sequence of the action steps within the three strategies needs to be coordinated to ensure that timelines for completion dates do not compete for resources.

A.2. Action Plan for Student Performance Objective #2:

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

Does this action plan:	YES	NO
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 MSA Visiting Team recommends reviewing the timeline to ensure that the plan will have the energy and resources needed for its implementation.
- The order of the action steps needs to be revisited to ensure a logical sequence. Adjusting the sequence by completion date may help ensure that the necessary action steps are easier to follow and have the necessary people or groups responsible for their implementation.
- This ambitious three-pronged Action Plan includes the adoption and use of a K-12 inquiry model, a K-12 standards-based writing across the curriculum implementation, and a K-12 technology integration system. The Visiting Team recommends that the school look closely at how best to achieve these long-range goals in concrete and sustainable ways.

A.3.   Organizational Capacity Objective #1

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

By 2023, ASL will strengthen its organizational health as measured by:

A.   An increase in the overall **score** on the Gallup Poll
Baseline year: Spring 2015
Baseline data: The Gallup Poll survey will be administered annually to measure our progress on meeting the goal of improving organizational health.

Overall Organization

Question	Baseline Index Score June 2015	Year 1 Target	Year 2 Target	Year 3 Target

0 – Overall Score	3.91	4.0	4.0+	4.0+

B.   Improvement in exit survey responses by faculty and staff in the following two areas:
   a.   Would recommend ASL to a colleague
   b.   Overall satisfaction with ASL

Question	Average of the last three years (2013-2015)	Goal (Results from three year average)
Would recommend ASL to a colleague	81%	85%
Overall satisfaction with ASL	81%	85%

Baseline year: Spring 2015

Baseline data: ASL has employed the use of an external company to conduct exit interviews for many years. We are seeking to use this data to measure employee engagement and satisfaction. The data is both qualitative and quantitative. The survey is given annually in the Spring to all faculty and staff who are leaving the school. Due to the variance in the pool size each year as the number of faculty and staff leaving varies, we seek to measure improvement through averaging the scores over the three years as we do not want a small sample one year to distort results. Our baseline data is the average of the results from 2015, 2014 and 2013.

* We communicated with MSA that we will only use the overall satisfaction score as our baseline data and received confirmation that that was fine. Additionally, in measure B, the exit survey, we decided that we would average the results over three years as our baseline data so that a small sample size in a given year would not distort the results. This was also approved.

	YES	NO
Is the objective:		
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	

Does the objective:		
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	
Does the school:		
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?

● While the Organizational Health Action Plan is not aligned with the *ASL Portrait of A Learner* (Profile of Graduates) from a student's perspective, it **is** strongly connected to the *Portrait of A Learner* as it relates to other stakeholders in the organization, particularly the faculty and staff. Because ASL has made an intentional decision to embrace all community members (admin, faculty, staff, parents, students) within its *Portrait of A Learner*, this action plan shows strong evidence of relevance to the school's plan for growth and improvement.

A.3. Action Plan for Organizational Capacity Objective #1:

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

Does this action plan:	YES	NO
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 Action Plan for Organizational Health stands strongly as evidence of responsiveness and courage at the American School in London. Unlike the school's other Action Plans that grew from the 2010 ASL Strategic Plan, Organizational Health was newly selected as a response to ASL Exit Surveys and Gallup Poll results. In choosing to prioritize the faculty's sense of belonging and efficacy over other potential improvement goals, ASL has shown a true commitment to achieving their vision for excellence in the areas of community and character.

ASL's Organizational Health Action Plan is extremely ambitious. It includes two strategies and twenty six action steps, many of which are, in and of themselves, whole-school goals. Many action steps are multi-faceted and include several sub-steps. For example, Action Step 12 of Strategy #1 include the exploration of models to develop collaborative groups. While it is essential that the school take this important step, such work will require extensive training and support. Knowing the importance to ASL of fully realizing the desired objective, it is recommended that school leaders and the committee:
● Carefully consider the pacing of the action steps to maximize the potential for success and adjust completion dates as needed;

- Prioritize the action steps to determine which ones might provide the most momentum for faculty and staff;
- Continue to unpack the data as it is collected to reveal trends and patterns in an effort to deepen understanding of multiple school culture variables at work;
- Consider secondary metrics (both qualitative and quantitative) that may broaden the ability to evaluate progress over time;
- Take the necessary time to be intentional about sequencing the action steps to ensure that the roll-out of this work is manageable and well understood across the school;
- Reframe the Indicators of Success within the action plan as more detailed Key Performance Indicators in an effort to gain clarity about what completion of each action step will ultimately look like at the school. In this way, stakeholders can be confident that completion of action steps has occurred.

A.4. Organizational Capacity Objective #2

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

By 2023, ASL All student learning will be guided by a vertically-aligned, written K-12 curriculum as evidenced by:
- Units of learning that are informed by
  - Adopted standards and benchmarks
  - Enduring understandings
  - Essential questions
- Standards-based assessment
- Standards-based grading
- Standards-based reporting practices

A. Yearly increase in mapped curricular units leading to all units mapped in Atlas   Rubicon, which include attached standards-aligned assessments, assessment criteria and exemplars.

Baseline year: Fall 2015

Baseline data: Development and pace of mapping curriculum will be delineated in the Action Plans.

% of Courses <u>Fully</u> Mapped Fall 2015
0

A. Fully implemented standards-based report cards reflecting implemented standard-based grading and assessment policies at all grade levels.

Baseline data: June 2015
Baseline data:

Grade	Report card implemented?
K1	NO
K2	NO
Grade 1	NO
Grade 2	NO
Grade 3	NO
Grade 4	NO
Grade 5	NO
Grade 6	NO
Grade 7	NO
Grade 8	NO
Grade 9	NO
Grade 10	NO
Grade 11	NO
Grade 12	NO

B. By 2023, the learning outcomes, in the form of the enduring understandings and standards, of each unit will be made public to the community.

Baseline data: June 2015
Baseline data

Grade	Learning Outcomes Public?
K1	NO
K2	NO
Grade 1	NO
Grade 2	NO
Grade 3	NO
Grade 4	NO
Grade 5	NO
Grade 6	NO
Grade 7	NO
Grade 8	NO
Grade 9	NO
Grade 10	NO
Grade 11	NO
Grade 12	NO

	YES	NO
Is the objective:		
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	
Does the objective:		
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	
Does the school:		
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?

No recommendations.

A.4. Action Plan for Organizational Capacity Objective #2:

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

Does this action plan:	YES	NO
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?

● Pacing and impact on teacher workload are factors to bear in mind in facilitating the completion of this action plan.
● This ambitious two-pronged Action Plan incorporates steps that lead to both a vertically-aligned K-12 curriculum and to a school-wide standards-based assessment, grading and reporting system. The Visiting Team recommends that ASL thoughtfully plan for a carefully paced and sequenced completion and implementation to ensure the success of these Objectives.

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 Visiting Team has seen evidence of:
- A Mission
- Beliefs
- A Profile of Graduates
- Four objectives (two measurable student performance and two organizational capacity objectives). Cultural Competency and Writing & Investigation are student performance

objectives focused on growing and improving student performance.

- Baseline data for at least one assessment for two of the Objectives (Written, Aligned Curriculum and Organizational Health)
- 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)

The Visiting Team did not see evidence of baseline data for the Student Performance Objectives (Cultural Competency and Writing & Investigation).

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:

- The school collect baseline data for the Student Performance Objectives.

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 the American School in London 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

The Visiting Team and I are pleased to see so many members of the school community present to hear our report. We will leave ASL at the end of this report feeling that we have had profoundly and positively memorable experience in your school.

We have appreciated so much the warm receptions we have received and the consistency and balance with which you have shared your aspirations, challenges, and recent successes, which are many. There has been passion, sincerity, and candor that have energized us and made our experience feel deeply meaningful and wonderfully professional. Thank you to all of the members of the American School in London community.

This oral report is a brief summary of the major points that will likely be included in the written report, which will follow in approximately six to eight weeks.

According to protocol, I will read this report and we cannot entertain any questions or enter into any discussion. You will have the opportunity to ask questions about our findings after you have received and reviewed the written report.

At the outset, I want to recognize and thank publicly an outstanding and talented group of educators who are Middle States Association Visiting Team to the American School in London. Lisa Emborsky, Mark Pingitore, Michael Amodio, and Miriam O'Brian: you have all given your expertise, focused curiosity, and your valuable time in the service of school improvement – thank you for everything you have done here in London for this learning community. It has been such a pleasure.

As a Visiting Team, we are here at the school's invitation to study the work that you are doing and your plans for the future.

First, we were charged with ensuring that the American School in London meets the 12 Middle States Standards for Accreditation.

In addition to meeting the standards, the accreditation protocol you have engaged —*Excellence by Design*—requires that you to have a system of continuous planning for school improvement. It also requires that you develop goals for improving areas of student performance and that you create plans to achieve those goals. In addition, your school was asked to develop one or more organizational growth objectives. The expectation is that, after the team leaves, you will faithfully implement your improvement plan over the next seven years and make a good faith effort to achieve the goals you set.

In addition to being the validators, we came as your "constructive colleagues." We came to look, listen, and learn with discerning eyes and ears as professional friends and colleagues. What we have to say to you is offered in the spirit of our desire to leave you in a better position to achieve your goals than before we arrived.

Let me begin the substance of this report by sharing with you what we have determined to be the strengths of your school.

We have met with innumerable teams and groups throughout and across your community. We have spoken with individuals, and we have observed classes, drop off, pick up, meetings, lunchtimes, and breaks. We have seen student work, and we have listened and learned from the stakeholder group at the core of your mission – your students. I offer my candid regrets if we have somehow missed meeting or speaking with you. As a team we have shared and discussed and found ourselves fascinated and moved by the work of so many committed educators, students, staff, and parents.

We see you currently at a point in your school improvement trajectory that we would call "embedding excellence."

Excellence does not mean that you have arrived. Far from it. Excellence, as we mean it here, is a ubiquitous commitment to improvement at all levels of the school, a student-focused approach to learning, an intense passion for learning among all stakeholders, and a dedication to the engagement of all forms of data to inform decision-making.

As you should already know, embedding excellence requires the collaborative and collective weaving together of vision, strategy, goals, action, resilience, patience, and empathy into a coherent tapestry of change. This takes time and patience and ASL in its vast reserves of organizational and human capacity has the time and patience. Use it.

The Visiting Team believes that ASL is becoming a master weaver of transformative and innovative education. Remember to recognize each other for this, take a breath occasionally, and keep the well-being of your charges (and yourselves) at the top of your priority list.

ASL's own brand of mission-driven educational transformation is moving you appropriately and sustainably from the present into the exciting and unknown future. Go forth with the same courage and optimism that brought you to this point today. Stay engaged in excellence.

You are effectively evolving your culture of learning around the mission, the vision for excellence, core values, and portrait of a learner; you continue to build profound capacity for adaptation through the commitment and constructive collaboration of your Board of Trustees, Senior Leadership teamss, parent networks, your operations, finance, and business teams, and

student-oriented faculty; and you are instilling an ethic of planning and innovation through a content rich and dynamic strategic plan and subsequent plan for growth and improvement.

We commend your school's leadership, particularly your Head of School, Coreen Hester, and the school's evolving teams at all levels for their courage and grit to develop and stay focused on your mission, vision for excellence, core values, and portrait of a learner. There has been razor-like focus here – among so many administrators, teachers, students, staff, trustees, and parents – during a time of profound positive shifts in the orientation and culture of the school. We want to recognize that and commend your entire learning community. The sense of purpose and commitment to a culture of learning at all levels of your organization – especially among your current faculty – has strengthened your community and served to support student achievement and to empower your students to make a difference in the lives of others both inside and outside of the school. One teacher said to us: "We strive for excellence and we are never complacent." Another said: "We are not a cookie cutter kind of school. ASL has highly trained, intelligent teachers who don't need to follow a script. They can take an idea and make it their own." Four different students spoke of the character of ASL's electric student-teacher battery: "Our teachers don't just teach us, they care about us." "It doesn't matter who you are, you can always find a staff member you can connect with." "Our teachers help us find success." "Teachers encourage you to be conceptual and grow to a different level."

Further, the alignment of your Trustees with school leadership, with your operations, finance, and business teams, and with parent networks, including the Parent Community Association is in the team's estimation one of your school's greatest strengths. Within the complex network of structures that compose the ASL ecosystem, there is tremendous support for the work of your student-oriented faculty in the interests of student learning. Taken together with the growth mindset that permeates the culture your school, your human and financial resources have the potential to move the school to and through your mission. Necessary resources are consistently organized and engaged to implement mission-driven decisions. From one team we heard, "At ASL, everyone works together as a team. There is a level of thoughtfulness in implementation that I haven't seen at any other school." You are armed with profound capacity for adaptation. Appreciate it and continue to harness it.

You have engineered an ethic of planning and innovation through a content rich and dynamic strategic plan and your subsequent plan for growth and improvement. You have four aspirational and relevant student performance and organizational capacity objectives. These are mission-aligned and ambitious plans that appropriately extended your 2010 strategic plan and which cohere to facilities master, finance, and maintenance plans: students will demonstrate greater cultural competency; students will improve their ability to investigate and analyze meaningful ideas to express them effectively through written and digital forms; ASL will strengthen its organizational health; all student learning will be guided by a vertically-aligned, written K-12 curriculum. And, through these efforts, you are building a durable,

flexible, and dynamic planning ethic into the fabric of the school. You have built a culture of planning integration such that your organizational and learning priorities can move from idea to engagement to implementation. Your students will ultimately be the beneficiaries of your vision. One student sees ASL this way: "The school looks at each child as an individual and helps them reach their potential." Stay this challenging and brave course.

It is also our responsibility to share with you any opportunities that we may see as you proceed toward a mission-driven transformation. We have derived these initial recommendations from the many conversations, the vast archive of evidence that we have been able to review, and your own reporting in your self-study.

Most of these opportunities will not come as surprises to you.

- While your planning ethic is thriving, the opportunity that lies ahead is the development of your next strategic plan. With your current plan for growth and improvement, you have constructed a connective and durable bridge from your 2010 plan to the next formalization of ASL's strategic vision. The conversations that you are currently having about your identity, which will necessarily evolve as you set aspirational goals for yourselves, will help to lay groundwork for rich conversations as you prepare for a planning process in the next couple of years.

- ASL is thriving within the culture of learning that I have already described. Your academic programs, students, and faculty represent a constellation of pride points for your community. We would like to indicate four areas within the academic program that our team believes should continue to receive attention, support, and
    o Your professional learning program – through your exemplary Learning Institutes, job-embedded professional development, and goal-driven professional development agenda – will continue to be a critical component of sustainable transformation. Continue to link your professional learning work with your school improvement planning.
    o You already have your goal and action plan for further work in curriculum alignment. You are poised to push forward in this area. The team applauds this work.
    o In the next few years, ASL will be striving to realize its vision as a standards-based assessment system. This is meaningful and aspirational work and will require share commitment and effort.
    o You have accomplished a lot in a short amount of time in the area of technology. Seamless technology integration requires time, commitment, and vision. You are on a path of transformative shifts in the way students use and access technology to enhance their learning. Continue to find ways to leverage the value-add of technology processes throughout the school.

- As you proceed into your uncertain and yet transformative future, mind yourselves and the well-being of those around you. Your Visiting Team members are all familiar with the fast pace of schools and the sometimes frustrating sense that there is no end to the train of innovation opportunities and initiatives. Truthfully, there is no end to that train, but there is an opportunity to take shared ownership in the management and integration of value-added initiatives. Engage beta mode as your new normal.

- Successful individuals and organizations excellent work going on here, we offer the caution of complacency. "Embedding excellence" requires a vigilant commitment to finding ways to get better; to shifting and raising the bar to meet each and every student's needs; to being and to staying relevant today every day. To continue to evolve your own unique innovative culture, you need to encourage and support appropriate risk-taking, embrace and learn from your mistakes and failures, and don't blink eye when you jump back in and try things again. Don't let yourselves believe that enough is enough. As a group of five international school constructive colleagues, we have faith in you.

- ASL has gotten to this point in the school's history and is on an impressive trajectory to a promising future. To learn, grow, and transform together, you should continue to integrate systems and structures for continuous and on-going feedback across all areas of your organization. You have recognized the value of on-going feedback (your students are exemplary in the way they take and use feedback), your next step will be to find ways to assure its broader and more consistent application.

Now, let me move to the accreditation decision we will make to the Middle States Commission.

As I stated earlier, part of the decision regarding whether to recommend re-accreditation of the American School in London is based on whether you meet the 12 standards for accreditation. These standards address every aspect of the programs, services, and resources you provide for your student. They also address the school's capacity to provide an appropriate education based on the standards and expectations of your community.

We concluded that ASL meets all 12 of the standards for accreditation.

ASL has sought re-accreditation through the *Excellence by Design* protocol the purpose of which is to provide a framework and process to guide the school's efforts to achieve excellence in student performance. By engaging *Excellence By Design*, the American School in London should demonstrate the following:
- Development of a sense of community and common purpose among students and staff, and community of stakeholders.

- A Plan for Growth and Improvement in student performance and the capacity to produce the levels of student performance expected by the school and its community of stakeholders.
- Greater cooperation between all stakeholders in identifying and implementing practices that have been demonstrated to lead to excellence in student performance and the capacity to produce the desired levels of student performance.

We believe that ASL demonstrates these characteristics and the commitment to continue to build them into the DNA of the school.

This Visiting Team will recommend to the Middle States Commission that ASL be re-accredited for seven years without monitoring issues or stipulations.

As we take our leave, the members of the Visiting Team wish to thank all of you for opening your school to us, for sharing with us your experiences, hopes, and your concerns, and for your wonderful hospitality. Our experience here has been a rich and rewarding one.

Many thanks especially go to Ms. Robyn Chapel and Ms. Jennifer Kirstein, your Internal Coordinators, who led in the preparation your self-study and who persevered through a challenging start-of-year and managed to stay committed to your re-accreditation calendar. On that note, to everyone who was directly involved in your self-study – thank you and well done.

Thank you to your Board of Trustees and Head of School who made time for us in numerable team meetings and for the exceptional governance leadership you all have shown as your school community strives to live your Vision, Mission, and Beliefs.

Thank you parents who met with us and whose support of the school is palpable.

Thank you faculty for opening up your classrooms and perspectives to us both during our visit and in the self-study.

Thank you ASL students. Your warmth and openness were noteworthy and extraordinary. We have seen the meaning of your mission, vision, and values come alive in the words and actions of your students.

In this era of global change and social and cultural uncertainty, we are also convinced that when people come together with a common purpose for the sake of their children – for the sake of our collective futures – justice can be found, diversity can lead to harmony, conflict can become peace, and missions can be achieved.

It has been an honor to join you for this week and become a small part of your story.

We wish you the all the success as you continue to evolve as a learning community committed to embedding excellence.

Thank you so very much.

VISITING TEAM ROSTER

Role	Name	School/Organization
Chair of the Team	Andrew Hoover	American International School Chennai
Team Member	Lisa Emborsky	American Community School of Abu Dhabi
Team Member	Mark Pingitore	American School of Barcelona
Team Member	Michael Amodio	American School of Milan
Team Member	Miriam O'Brien	American Overseas School of Rome