



## THANK YOU FOR YOUR FEEDBACK

### Message from MSA President Henry G. Cram, Ed.D

As we end the 2016-2017 school year, I want to take this opportunity to thank all of our members who took the time to respond to our Bi-Annual Membership Survey this month. This year, the survey was especially important to us as we are completing our current strategic planning cycle (*Leadership for Learning*), and finalizing our new strategic plan, which will take effect in January 2018 (*Taking Accreditation to the Next Level*).

We will be analyzing your responses in the coming weeks, but a preliminary review of your feedback shows a continuing improvement in our accreditation services and protocols and in our relationship with our member institutions. Ninety-seven percent of members surveyed indicated the accreditation process is a major factor in improving their school or school system's performance; an increase of 7 percent since the initial survey in 2011. Increases can also be noted when it comes to assisting with curriculum alignment, improving governance and leadership and serving as a catalyst for change.

The survey also shows improvement in our communications with our member schools and an increase in member satisfaction with accreditation officers and staff relations and performance.

We have also received some great suggestions for further improvement and new ways in which we can be of greater service to you. There is discernible and growing interest in more online and web-based resources, including but certainly not limited to an online self-study process, trainings on specific components of the accreditation process, trainings for chairs and trainings for team members. And finally, the survey results affirm the decision to expand our mission to include "providing the network and resources for the promotion of proven practices" for our members.

We will be implementing many of your suggestions in the coming months as part of our new strategic planning efforts.

Staying in touch with our membership is important to us and informs how we plan for and monitor our improvement efforts.

This year's survey results have reinforced our goal of the continuous improvement of our services to our member schools. The responses gathered will set a clear path for the continuation of that progress.

We are committed to demonstrating to you, our membership, that we practice what we preach!



Henry G. Cram, Ed.D

## CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR NEWLY ACCREDITED AND REACCREDITED SCHOOLS!

This spring, 148 schools and school systems in 12 states, as well as Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands and seven countries have earned accreditation or reaccreditation through Middle States.

"I congratulate our newly accredited and reaccredited schools for their ongoing commitment to achieving excellence," said Henry G. Cram, Ed.D., president of the Middle States Association Commissions on Elementary and Secondary Schools. "The Middle States accreditation process is a proven and cost-effective approach to help schools and students grow and improve."

A full list of schools and school systems that earned accreditation or reaccreditation is available [here](#).

### Also In this Issue:

- School Leaders Find Added Value in Systems Approach to Accreditation
- Cooperative Accreditation: Best of Both Worlds
- Programs of Distinction Awarded for Music, Service Learning
- Q&A with MSA Commissioner Sr. Anita Gallagher

## SCHOOL LEADERS FIND ADDED VALUE IN SYSTEMS APPROACH TO ACCREDITATION

An increasing number of school systems are choosing to use the Middle States Systems Approach to accreditation, a cost-effective approach that helps ensure curriculum alignment and promotes a system approach to school improvement.

The Rochester Diocese of Catholic Schools earned accreditation last month for its 19 schools in upstate New York. In addition, Prince George's County Public High Schools in Maryland also earned accreditation as a system as did the Brookhaven-Comsewogue Union Free School District in Port Jefferson Station, N.Y.

"As a system of prestigious Catholic schools, we appreciated that the Middle States accreditation process addressed the uniqueness of each school community," said Dr. Anthony Cook, Superintendent of the Diocese of Rochester Catholic Schools. "Accreditation through Middle States is not only an independent validation of the good work we do, but is a valuable process that has helped us with strategic planning, curriculum design, and collaboration."

Rather than each individual school pursuing accreditation separately, the Systems Approach enables school systems to save money and time by undergoing the accreditation process as a single organization.

The Systems Approach examines school systems as a whole, ensuring that all levels are strategically aligned and working collaboratively to meet common goals and grow and improve student performance.

To learn more about the Systems Approach to accreditation, contact us at 267.284.5000 or [info@msa-cess.org](mailto:info@msa-cess.org) today.

## COOPERATIVE ACCREDITATION: BEST OF BOTH WORLDS

At the Middle States Association Commissions on Elementary and Secondary Schools, we recognize there is no one-size-fits-all approach to accreditation.

That's why we are proud to partner with more than 30 regional, international and special-purpose accrediting agencies to offer schools cooperative – or dual – accreditation.

Accreditation through Middle States – the worldwide leader in accreditation and school improvement – can be seamlessly coordinated with our partner agencies, effectively providing your school the best of both worlds.

Schools cooperatively accredited through Middle States have access to our various accreditation protocols, including options for schools that are just developing and those that are already high performing.

Other value-added benefits of dual accreditation with Middle States include:

- Eligibility to apply for special recognition of exemplary programs through our Programs of Distinction initiative.
- Access to a worldwide network of more than 2,700 member schools and added credibility that your school is on par with similar schools around the globe.
- Multiple perspectives and increased diversity among peer evaluators, adding to the validity and reliability of your school's self study.

To learn more about the value of cooperative accreditation, call 267.284.5000 or e-mail [info@msa-cess.org](mailto:info@msa-cess.org) today.

### SCHOOLS TAKE ACCREDITATION TO NEXT LEVEL WITH SUSTAINING EXCELLENCE PROTOCOL

Congratulations to Central High School in Philadelphia, Pa. and Mount de Sales Academy in Catonsville, Md. for achieving reaccreditation through the Middle States Sustaining Excellence protocol, which helps high performing schools continue to excel.

### HAVE YOU REGISTERED FOR FALL 2017 WORKSHOPS?

Check out the schedule and register here.

All workshops are free for members!

## PROGRAMS OF DISTINCTION AWARDED FOR MUSIC, SERVICE LEARNING

The Middle States Association Commissions on Elementary and Secondary Schools recently recognized Lancaster Catholic High School in Lancaster, Pa. for its Program of Distinction in Music and Waldron Mercy Academy in Merion Station, Pa. for its Program of Distinction in Service Learning.



The Music Program of Distinction recognizes schools and school systems that foster within students a deep appreciation for music as an expressive, creative art form and where music education is recognized as an essential component of the social and cultural fiber of society and the school.

“At Lancaster Catholic, we believe that music and the arts are at the core of our human experience,” said Principal Terry Klugh. “As many American schools have eliminated the opportunities offered in fine arts courses, we have broadened and designed our curriculum so there is something for each and every student, from a course on the history of rock and roll to opportunities to join one of our many accomplished performance groups. We are proud that Middle States has recognized this work by naming our music program a Program of Distinction.”



The Service Learning Program of Distinction recognizes schools that integrate community service into the total school program, including the academic curriculum, through activities involving civic responsibility and citizenship.

“At Waldron Mercy, our students address the needs of others through acts of service. They learn to serve not merely out of charity, but from a developing sense of social justice,” said Principal Nell Stetser. “We are honored to be recognized by Middle States for our commitment to service learning and are proud of our school community for living the mission of the Sisters of Mercy.”



The Middle States Programs of Distinction initiative provides external validation of an accredited school’s accomplishments in specific areas of expertise and enables schools to take accreditation to the next level.

The Programs of Distinction review process helps already accredited schools identify strengths and areas for growth and provides inspiration and recommendations for attaining a high quality program.

MSA accredited schools are eligible to apply for Program of Distinction recognition for outstanding programs in Global Literacies, World Languages, Visual Arts, Music, Early Childhood Education, Service Learning, School Counseling and STEM Education.

Does your school have an outstanding program that deserves recognition? Contact us today to apply for a Program of Distinction designation! Call 267.284.5000 or e-mail [info@msa-cess.org](mailto:info@msa-cess.org).



### DON'T FORGET TO VOTE!

Do you know who makes the accreditation decisions for MSA? MSA Commissioners are educational and business leaders from around the world, representing our various regions and categories of membership. These 39 individuals meet biannually to review your accreditation reports and our finances, policies, and strategic plan. Look for a ballot coming your way next week for your opportunity to vote for our newest Commissioners.

# Q & A WITH MIDDLE STATES COMMISSIONER SR. ANITA GALLAGHER, IHM, ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT IN THE OFFICE OF EDUCATION FOR THE DIOCESE OF ALLENTOWN



Q. How did you decide to become an educator?

A. When I was little my friends and I would spend hours playing school. We'd take turns playing the teacher, and I loved it. I was always fascinated by teachers and liked observing how they taught and got kids to learn. The Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary are teachers so when I joined them it was a good fit.

Q. When did you decide to become a Sister?

A. I was in high school at Little Flower in Philadelphia. We had Eucharistic Adoration on Thursdays, and I would go in the church and just spend a little time during lunch or after school. It was then that I found my calling. A priest told me once that the Lord got to my heart before somebody else did.

Q. How do you think schools and school systems – particularly Catholic schools – can benefit from Middle States accreditation?

A. Middle States helps all schools be the best they can be. They respect the uniqueness of each school and their standards align with the standards established by the National Catholic Education Association. There are so many schools out there today, it's important that parents, students and teachers know that their school passes certain standards.

Q. Who was your favorite teacher in school, and why?

A. I had a couple favorites, but Sr. Collette in 8th grade really stands out. She made learning so much fun. She showed such love and respect for all the students that we just wanted to learn.

Q. What do you enjoy doing in your free time?

A. I like being in nature, walking on the beach, being with friends and family. I enjoy reading and going to the movies.

Q. Do you have a favorite movie?

A. This year I thought Hidden Figures was the best.

Q. What's one thing that people might be surprised to learn about you?

A. My immediate family was small, but I have nearly 100 cousins, and about 75 of them are in Ireland.

BEST WISHES FOR A RELAXING  
AND REJUVENATING SUMMER  
BREAK FROM ALL OF US AT  
MSA-CESS!

Thank you for your commitment to  
academic excellence and school  
improvement this year.

We look forward to our continued  
work with you in 2017-2018.



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