



April 2021

Dear Parents and Guardians:

This communication is to inform you that our Middle States Accreditation visit is coming, and to give you information about the visit, its purpose, and the process.

What is Middle States Accreditation?

Accreditation is the process that schools go through to get certified as a worthwhile learning institution. There are several non-profit organizations that grant accreditation, but the Middle States Association is considered to be the best. The School District of Philadelphia started the process of renewing/establishing accreditation for all of its schools two years ago. Academy at Palumbo is part of the second wave of schools to go through the process.

Why get accredited?

Accreditation is a stamp of approval. It tells us that we are doing good things when it comes to educating our students. More importantly, it tells other institutions, like colleges and universities, that we're doing good things in our school. Accreditation helps us climb in the rankings, and climbing in the rankings means that our students are more attractive to more top tier post-secondary schools. The accreditation process also gives us a chance to examine our school in a meaningful way, and prompts us to make changes that will positively impact our school community.

What is the process?

The process started spring of last year. We sent out surveys to all of our stakeholders (students, staff, parents/guardians) to get their opinion on how well we are currently meeting the standards set by Middle States. We then put together a Planning Committee made up of representatives of all our stakeholders who reviewed the answers from the surveys, and applied a lens to all of our processes to evaluate ourselves on each of the standards. The Planning Committee then decided on a set of actions that our school can take to improve what we do, because the most important part of accreditation is finding ways to get better. No school is perfect, and we should always be looking to improve! The district has submitted our application to Middle States for review, and we will get a visit by an accreditation team. We find out our results later this year.

Action Plan

Part of the process is to set a goal and prepare an action plan to meet that goal. Our goal is: by 2028, 87% of students will score Proficient or Advanced on the Algebra 1 Keystone Exam by their 12th grade year. We chose this goal, because we see a high correlation between passing the Algebra Keystone and achieving good scores on the ACT/SAT. Frequently ACT/SAT scores are a barrier for our students to

getting into their top choice schools, and we want to remove that barrier. In addition, high performance in math correlates with overall stronger analytical skills and learning outcomes.

How are parents/guardians involved?

You already are involved! Unless you are a parent/guardian of a freshman you probably filled out a survey at the start of this process. It was very long, because it covered all of the areas by which we are evaluated by Middle States. Your input helped us decide what our primary planning goals should be. You will continue to be part of the process by giving us periodic feedback on how we're doing with meeting the standards set by Middle States.

Where does the visit fit in?

Middle States will be coming in May to conduct its in-person review. Most of their time will be spent at the district level, but one day will be spent (virtually) with Academy at Palumbo. They will be taking a "tour" of our school, visiting some of our classes during teaching time, and asking us many questions. The visit is to give them a better understanding, and a clearer picture of who we are as a school.

And that's it!

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask!

Sincerely,

Ms. Kiana Thompson, Principal

Ms. Charmelia Bond, Assistant Principal