

SECTION 3

WHAT IS ACCREDITATION FOR GROWTH?

A *ccreditation for Growth (AFG)* is an accreditation protocol that uses strategic planning as a vehicle for growth and improvement in student performance and in the institution's capacity to effect that growth. The protocol, developed by the Middle States Commission on Secondary Schools (MSCSS) of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, links various planning and institutional growth and improvement efforts. In *AFG*, the primary determinants of progress are not the resources a community provides for its educational institutions (the inputs), but instead the actual results of the institution's work—the students' performance. *AFG* requires the institution to establish objectives for improving student performance based on its vision of a preferred future for the students. Therefore, *AFG* is a future-oriented and visionary process. In addition, the *AFG* 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.

Frequently Asked Questions about the Accreditation for Growth protocol.....

To what does an institution commit when it selects the Accreditation for Growth protocol?

By choosing *AFG* as its accreditation protocol, an institution must make several commitments:

A Focus on Student Performance and Growth

- The institution is committed to focusing its improvement efforts on growth and improvement in student performance and the institution's capacity to affect that growth and improvement. Improvement efforts are aimed at targeted growth and improvement in student learning, student performance, and student results.

A Culture of Accountability in Student Performance

- The institution is committed to student performance objectives that are measurable. There is a viable process for monitoring achievement of the objectives, and there is an accountability system for monitoring accomplishment the objectives and the action plans to achieve them.

A Planning Ethic

- The institution is committed to a continuous clarification of its unique mission, beliefs, and expectations in terms of student performance. The institution is action-oriented as shown by the development of long-term strategic action plans that integrate program, services, facilities, and other support systems to address growth needs.

Commitment to Continuous Improvement

- The institution is committed to continuous evaluation, an annual review process, peer review, and a dynamic process with the flexibility to modify action plans.

Involvement of Representative Constituents

- The institution is committed to involving a broad spectrum of the institution's stakeholders in identifying the mission, beliefs, profile of graduates, objectives for growth and improvement in student performance, and action plans to achieve the objectives. Stakeholders are also involved in overseeing implementation of action plans and monitoring achievement of the objectives.

When an institution selects the *Accreditation for Growth* protocol, it must endorse these five commitments. All levels of the organization, including the governing board, the central staff, and the institution itself must commit to working together toward the implementation of the growth and improvement plan developed in the *Accreditation for Growth* process. To demonstrate this commitment, the institution will complete the *AFG* Commitment Form in Exhibit 3A. The Commitment Form will be included in the Self-Study Document prepared for the Validation Team (see Section 9).

Exhibit 3B provides a checklist of required ongoing communications between the institution and the Middle States Association throughout the *AFG* accreditation process.

What are the components of the Accreditation for Growth protocol?

Exhibit 3C provides an overview of the specific components of the *Accreditation for Growth* protocol. First, the institution must demonstrate that it meets the MSA Standards for Accreditation. It is expected that representative stakeholders will be involved in determining how well the institution meets these standards.

Second, a team representing the stakeholders of the institution and community must develop a plan to improve areas of student performance that have been identified as priorities for growth and improvement. This plan should be consistent with the institution's overall strategic plan. The plan must contain the following components:

- A mission
- Belief statements
- A profile of graduates that describes the desired attributes and achievements that students are expected to exhibit upon graduation/exiting the final grade of the institution
- Two, three, or four measurable student performance objectives approved by Middle States
- Action plans that detail what the institution and its community will do to achieve those objectives.

Finally, the institution must put into place planning structures and processes that will ensure the institution has the capacity, the will, and the systems to implement its action plans. The planning process typically includes two or more educators serving as coordinators of the planning and accreditation process, and a team of stakeholders that is responsible for developing and monitoring the *AFG* growth and improvement plan, establishing procedures for communicating

planning activities to the educational community and obtaining the community's ongoing input into the plan, ensuring that the plan is reviewed at least annually, and establishing one or more teams responsible for developing, reviewing, and revising the action plans.

How does Accreditation for Growth differ from other accreditation protocols?

Middle States provides its member institutions with a number of options for the protocol they will use for accreditation. Therefore, an important question to ask is, "What are the major differences between other accreditation protocols and *AFG*?" In order to understand the *AFG* protocol and the reasons why this alternative was created, a comparison with the traditional protocol used for over 45 years might be helpful. The description below shows the five major areas in which differences can be identified: focus, stakeholder involvement, structure, review, and drive.

FOCUS: In traditional accreditation processes, the institution focuses its attention on a *retrospective* look at what it has done to improve such variables as educational programs, student services, learning media services/technology, and facilities. As a part of the self-study process, the institution conducts a comprehensive study of inputs into the educational process. For institutions that need an in-depth self-examination from the "inside-out," the traditional process often remains the protocol of choice.

In the *Accreditation for Growth* protocol, the focus of the institution's attention is on a *prospective* look toward a desired future. In *AFG*, a strategic plan is developed that details desired *results*—what the institution aims to improve in areas of student performance determined by the institution itself. Two, three, or four student performance objectives clearly outline those priority areas on which resources and the institution's growth and improvement initiatives will be concentrated. The growth and improvement process is based on the priorities that the institution and its community identify as important. Commitment and ownership grow from the early stages of identifying the hopes and aspirations of the educational community.

STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT: Another area of difference lies in the range of individuals involved in the improvement and accreditation activities of the institution. In the traditional approach, the institution's staff and administration are the primary participants in the self-study and evaluation process.

Accreditation for Growth, however, requires broader stakeholder involvement and requires contributions from the staff, administration, parents, board members, students, alumni, and often community representatives. This is considered to be essential, because *AFG* is based on constructing a clear notion of the institution's mission and its underlying belief system. In *AFG*, a broader group of constituents is needed to chart a future direction for the institution and to support the efforts needed to reach that future direction.

STRUCTURE: The traditional accreditation process involves all staff members and the administration in a number of subcommittees that meet over the course of approximately one year to analyze inputs—every subject area along with other areas such as student services,

guidance, facilities, and finance. A Steering Committee comprised of staff and administration provides overall management of the process during the year of self-study and during the subsequent visiting team's evaluation. Once the self-study and visit are completed, these groups typically disband.

In the *AFG* process, there is a single Planning Team comprised of representatives of each of the institution's stakeholder groups. This Team initially develops the mission, beliefs, profile of graduates, and student performance objectives, and oversees development of action plans to achieve the objectives. While membership on the Planning Team may change over time, the group continues to meet throughout the accreditation cycle to provide oversight of the implementation of the growth and improvement plan. Some institutions, especially larger school districts and educational institutions, also use separate action plan and implementation teams for each of their student performance objectives. This allows broader stakeholder participation and involvement in the action planning and implementation processes. Such teams, however, generally report to the overall Planning Team on a regular basis.

REVIEW: The traditional approach provides a ten-year accreditation cycle with two five-year accreditation terms. An onsite visit by a team of ten to fifteen educators at the beginning of each cycle is followed by a smaller, shorter Five-Year Review visit at the midpoint of the ten-year timeline in order to renew accreditation for a second five-year term. A Five-Year Review report is submitted to the Middle States Association in which the institution describes what actions it has taken on each of the Visitation Team's recommendations

Ongoing review is the hallmark of the *AFG* protocol, and the institution's Planning Team is required to conduct a review of the plan and the institution's progress toward achieving its student performance objectives at least annually. Every seven years, a Validation Team (typically five individuals) makes an onsite visit to the institution to examine the results of these annual reviews, the institution's ongoing planning processes, and the implementation of the growth and improvement plan. Two and one-half years following the Team's visit, one individual, appointed by MSA, makes an onsite Mid-Point Review visit. Where possible, this individual is selected from the Validation Team that reviewed the plans and processes two to three years earlier. While the Mid-Point Review visit is typically completed in one day, a school district or large educational institution may require a longer visit and, possibly, more than one Mid-Point Reviewer.

DRIVE: A final difference between the traditional and *AFG* protocols can be found in what drives the accreditation process. External standards developed by Middle States and its member institutions are the driving force of the traditional accreditation process. These Standards for Accreditation include: educational programs, student services, learning media services and technology, facilities, finance, student life and student activities, leadership and governance, assessment of learning, health and safety, organizational design and staff, planning, and philosophy/mission/beliefs/ objectives.

AFG also assesses whether the institution meets the Middle States Association Standards for Accreditation. However, the driving force of the *AFG* protocol is a forward-looking strategic approach to ensuring growth and improvement in areas of student performance identified as

priorities for the institution. Internally-determined mission, beliefs, and objectives for improved student performance drive the work of educational communities engaged in *AFG*. The Validation Team looks at the Standards for Accreditation in two different ways. First, each standard is analyzed separately to ensure that the institution meets each standard. Second, and perhaps more importantly, the standards are examined in the context of the action plans and what will be needed to reach the student performance objectives the institution has set. Thus, addressing the standards (inputs) is directly linked to desired outputs, as demonstrated in improved student performance.

In summary, the traditional accreditation protocol emphasizes how well present programs are functioning and whether key input variables are in place. The *Accreditation for Growth* protocol emphasizes what is possible and desired for the future with the measure of success being the results produced by the institution. Exhibit 3D provides a rationale for choosing *AFG* as the accreditation protocol.

Are all institutions required to have an overall strategic plan AND a site plan specific to the institution?

When an institution is a part of a larger system, the larger system (e.g., a school district or diocesan/archdiocesan school system) often has a strategic plan in place. When such a plan exists, it is important for the institution's growth and improvement objectives and plan to be consistent with the larger system's plan. If, however, no system plan exists, an institution may still use the *Accreditation for Growth* planning process.

Why does Middle States think strategic planning is important to institutional growth and improvement?

Artful and effective planning can engender growth and improvement in educational outcomes in at least four meaningful and significant ways. First, effective planning involves the institution and its stakeholders in an *inductive* process that allows varied issues, concerns, hopes, and aspirations to be raised. It can open up boundaries and create new vistas, offering a forum for new, never-dreamed-of ideas to surface.

Second, effective planning begins with the development of a vision for the future and follows with self-evaluation and collection of data to determine how close the institution is to achieving its vision. A vision-driven process fosters commitment and ownership, and ownership is a powerful force for educational growth and improvement.

Third, effective planning requires an institution to focus on results first. In order to determine how to accomplish an objective, the institution must first decide exactly what it wants to achieve. The result of a well-taught class is not that the instruction was completed appropriately, but that following completion of instruction, learning occurred. Instruction is the means, learning is the result, and learning is reflected in student performance.

A fourth characteristic of effective planning is that it is continuous. Change is ubiquitous and likewise planning based on the results obtained should be ongoing.

What is the difference between long range planning, comprehensive planning, and strategic planning?

Long range planning assumes that the future is fixed and already known; planning is not based on a vision of what the future might or could be. The locus of control in long range planning is often external to the organization.

Two assumptions underlie comprehensive planning. The first assumption is that *existing systems* can be perfected. Secondly, it is assumed that these systems deserve to be perfected. In comprehensive planning, incremental changes are made to existing systems.

In strategic planning, the locus of control is inside the organization because planning is based on the organization's vision of a preferred future. Strategic planning assumes that as a human organization, the institution has the ability to exercise control over external factors and can create the future. Strategic planning is grounded in how the organization sees itself and how it sees the world. It is about creating the desired reality and going about building that future.

Does Middle States endorse a particular strategic planning approach?

Middle States does not endorse a particular approach to strategic planning. As long as the key commitments (see Exhibit 3E) are met, any well designed strategic planning process may be used.

What happens if the institution is unable to achieve its AFG objectives fully during the seven-year accreditation term?

First and foremost, Middle States is looking for evidence of growth and improvement in *student performance*. It is critical that the institution makes a good faith attempt to address fully its objectives and to implement the action plans upon which the institution's accreditation is based. The development of student performance objectives with reachable, yet lofty targets requires a delicate balance. MSA wants to see institutions develop objectives that challenge them and make them stretch to achieve them.

Besides looking for student performance growth, MSA is also expecting to see growth in the *organization's capacity* to produce the results it desires in terms of student performance. It is important for an institution to provide evidence that, if it is not making the kind of progress it had intended on the student performance objectives, it conducts a self-analysis to determine why and adjusts its plans accordingly. A "culture of planning" should cause an AFG institution to develop new systems continuously to ensure that the plans become a reality.

All of this is taken into consideration when the Commission makes its accreditation decision. An institution's accreditation would be in jeopardy if the institution did not achieve its objectives, did not try to determine why and revise its action plans accordingly, **and/or** had not made a good faith effort to implement its action plans.

Can a candidate institution choose the AFG protocol?

A candidate institution can select *AFG*, although, in some cases, the MSA staff might suggest that a candidate institution use one of its protocols that engages the institution in a comprehensive examination of all programs and services. The Candidacy Visitor who makes an onsite visit to a potential candidate institution can also help new institutions determine whether *AFG* is an appropriate approach to take.

Are there progress reports to be submitted to Middle States between Validation Team visits?

Because the focus of *AFG* is on continuous review, there are no interim progress reports submitted to MSA as is required in the traditional approach. However, institutions are expected to conduct reviews of the progress being made toward achieving its objectives at least once annually (although most institutions find that more frequent reviews are necessary). The Validation Team will examine the records of the reviews during its visit. Prior to the midpoint juncture in the seven-year accreditation term, an individual appointed by MSA will make a one-day onsite Mid-Point Review visit. Preparation for this review is described in detail in Section 12. Where possible, this individual will be a member of the Validation Team who reviewed the plans and processes two or three years earlier. Finally, when the next Validation Team visits the institution at the end of the seven-year accreditation term, team members will want to see evidence that continuous review and annual updates have taken place.

Can AFG be used in an institution that is rapidly changing, has frequent staff or administrative turnover, or has a transient student body?

Yes, all of these situations might be ideal for using the *Accreditation for Growth* protocol. Because *AFG* helps to provide focus and direction, many institutions find it is an appropriate process to ensure that the institution “stays the course” even as it experiences rapid changes in staff, students, or administration.

Because the *AFG* plan for growth and improvement in student performance is developed and, thereby, owned by the institution's stakeholders, the plan can serve as a stabilizing force, especially when there is a change in the leadership of the institution. Instead of selecting a new leader that is expected to act out *his/her* vision of a preferred future for institution, institutions with an *AFG* plan will look for a new leader who has the best knowledge, skills, and ideas to lead the school community in implementing *its* plan for a preferred future.

Can AFG be used in a Pre K-12 organization?

A Pre K-12 organization can use the *AFG* protocol to accredit its institutions. *Accreditation for Growth* has been officially recognized by both the Middle States Commission on Elementary Schools and the Middle States Commission on Secondary Schools as an appropriate accreditation option. See Section 15: Using the *AFG* Protocol for Pre K-12 Accreditation.

Can AFG be used by a charter institution or in an institution with a unique student population?

The flexibility of the *AFG* protocol makes it particularly adaptable for charter institutions and institutions that serve unique student populations. This accreditation option facilitates planning structures and improvement within the specific context of the institution.

What are the costs associated with accreditation using the *AFG* protocol?

The Middle States Association has made a concerted effort to reduce the costs associated with obtaining and maintaining accreditation by the Association.

The costs associated with the visit of the Validation Team have been reduced, because team membership is now typically five members. Costs for the Team are expenses for travel to and from the institution (typically by car involving mileage and tolls), a single room in a hotel/motel for three nights for each Team member, and breakfast and dinner for three days.

A chart the institution can use to determine the costs of obtaining and maintaining its accreditation is included as Exhibit 3F.

EXHIBIT 3A

Accreditation for Growth COMMITMENT FORM

By choosing *Accreditation for Growth (AFG)* as its accreditation protocol, an institution confirms its commitment to provide evidence of the following parameters:

A Focus on Student Performance and Growth

- The institution's improvement efforts will focus on growth and improvement in student performance and the institution's capacity to affect that growth and improvement. Improvement efforts are aimed at targeted growth and improvement in student learning, student performance, and student results.

A Culture of Accountability in Student Performance

- The institution's objectives are measurable, there is a viable process monitoring achievement of the objectives, and there is an accountability system for monitoring accomplishment of the objectives and the action plans to achieve them.

A Planning Ethic

- The institution is engaged in a continuous clarification of its unique mission, beliefs, and expectations in terms of student performance. The institution is action-oriented as shown by the development of long-term strategic action plans that integrate program, services, facilities, and other support systems to address growth needs.

Commitment to Continuous Improvement

- The institution is committed to continuous evaluation, an annual review process, peer review, and a dynamic process with the flexibility to modify action plans.

Involvement of Representative Constituents

- A broad spectrum of the institution's stakeholders are involved in identifying the mission, beliefs, profile of graduates, objectives for growth and improvement in student performance, and action plans to achieve the objectives. Stakeholders are also involved in overseeing implementation of action plans and monitoring achievement of the objectives.

In signing this form, representatives of the Board, the district/parent organization, and the institution endorse the above five commitments to demonstrate that all levels of the organization expect to work together toward the implementation of the *Accreditation for Growth* plan.

Name of Institution

City, State

Date

Head of Board's Signature

Head of District's Signature

Head of Institution's Signature

Printed or Typed Name

Printed or Typed Name

Printed or Typed Name

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EXHIBIT 3B

AFG CHECKLIST FOR WORKING WITH MIDDLE STATES

Please use this checklist to remind yourself of communications that need to occur with the MSA office.

Although a thorough description of the complete accreditation process is available in the AFG Planning Guide, the following specific interactions with the Middle States Office need to occur before your Validation Team's visit:

- Obtain required signatures on the AFG Commitment Form
Place the signed Commitment Form in the Self-Study Document.
- Submit an Application for Evaluation to request preferred dates for visit
An Application will be sent to the institution about one year before anticipated team visit.
- Submit Student Performance Objectives for Technical Review
E-mail (preferred) or fax as soon as objectives have been drafted and measurement tools have been determined.
- Receive Technical Approval of Objectives from MSA
2-3 Technical Reviews are often required before the institution and MSA agree on approved objectives.
- Mail a copy of the institution's Self-Study Document to the MSA Office
When mailing a copy to each Validation Team members, mail one to MSA.

Secondary Schools - Mail Self-Study Document to:

Middle States Commission on Secondary Schools
3624 Market Street, 2nd Floor Annex
Philadelphia, PA 19104

Elementary Schools - Mail Self-Study Document to:

Middle States Commission on Elementary Schools
One Belmont Avenue, Suite 618
Bala Cynwyd, PA 19004

K – 12 Institutions – Mail Self-Study Document to:

Middle States Committee on Institution-Wide Accreditation
3624 Market Street, 2nd Floor Annex
Philadelphia, PA 19104

EXHIBIT 3C

COMPONENTS OF THE *ACCREDITATION FOR GROWTH* PROTOCOL

STANDARDS FOR ACCREDITATION	PLANNING PROCESS	CONTENT OF THE PLAN
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Philosophy, Mission, Beliefs, and/or Objectives ▪ Governance and Leadership ▪ Organizational Design and Staff ▪ Educational Programs ▪ Learning Media Services and Technology ▪ Student Services ▪ Student Life and Student Activities ▪ Facilities ▪ Health and Safety ▪ Finances ▪ Assessment of Student Learning ▪ Planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Context of the Institution ▪ Planning Team <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Composition ▪ Operation ▪ Feedback ▪ Role of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Administration ▪ Governing Body ▪ Internal Coordinators ▪ External Facilitator** ▪ Communication and Awareness Activities ▪ Action Plan and Implementation Teams** ▪ Annual Reviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ District Strategic Plan** ▪ Beliefs ▪ Mission ▪ Profile of Graduates ▪ Internal Scan** ▪ External Scan** ▪ 2, 3, or 4 Measurable Student Performance Objectives with Technical Review ▪ <i>Non-Accreditation for Growth Goals**</i> ▪ Action Plans

**These items are not required by the protocol. However, many institutions have found that some or all of them contribute to a richer plans and greater chances that the performance goals will be realized.

EXHIBIT 3D

RATIONALE FOR CHOOSING *ACCREDITATION FOR GROWTH*

- The institution believes the focus on output of results is primary. What it achieves with students is more important than the input of resources. It is an inductive process, rather than a deductive one.
- The institution wants to be accredited on the basis of its growth in student performance *in addition* to meeting MSA Standards for Accreditation. The institution starts with the issues it wants and needs to address and develops actions to accomplish growth. The focus is on addressing internally-determined needs as well as on meeting external criteria or standards determined by the accrediting agency.
- The institution begins with the vision of where it wants and needs to go, creating a unifying force for change. *AFG* is visionary and futuristic, rather than operational.
- A broad spectrum of stakeholders defines, develops, and implements the vision for growth, thus ensuring greater acceptance, understanding and chances for success.
- District and institution planning can be linked; in many cases, linkages to state requirements can be established. This creates a more coherent and seamless approach to the institution's efforts for growth and accreditation.
- Review of progress is continuous, rather than periodic.
- The institution has a single structure for maintaining continuous growth as well as accreditation.
- *Accreditation for Growth* provides a process focused on change and growth, rather than a process for maintaining what an institution already has.
- *AFG* provides a process for identifying priorities so the institution knows where to put its resources.

EXHIBIT 3E

ACCREDITATION FOR GROWTH **COMMITMENTS**

The following five areas are the commitments the institution using *AFG* for accreditation must make. These commitments define the parameters for the development of student performance objectives and they are not negotiable. Evidence of these commitments must be in place in order for the institution to be accredited using the *AFG* protocol.

A Focus on Student Performance and Growth

- End results in student performance are key
- The institution's growth and improvement efforts are aimed at student learning, student performance, and student results

A Culture of Accountability in Student Performance

- Measurable student performance objectives
- Viable internal monitoring process; development and implementation of an accountability system for monitoring the accomplishment of the action plans

A Planning Ethic

- Continuous clarification of the institution's unique mission, beliefs, profile of graduates, and student performance objectives
- Processes that are vision-driven
- Action-oriented: development of long-term strategic action plans that integrate programs, services, facilities, and support to address growth needs

Commitment to Continuous Growth and improvement

- Continuous evaluation
- An annual review process
- A dynamic process; flexibility to modify plans
- Commitment to peer review

Involvement of Representative Constituents

- Inclusiveness
- Involvement and collaboration of stakeholders in the planning process
- Institution and community-wide ownership of planning process and content

EXHIBIT 3F

APPROXIMATE COSTS OF ACCREDITATION USING THE ACCREDITATION FOR GROWTH OR VALIDATING THE VISION PROTOCOLS

The costs for being accredited by the Middle States Association using the *AFG* or *VTV* protocols vary depending on a number of variables. These variables include: 1) where the institution is in the seven-year accreditation term; 2) the costs for hotel rooms and meals in the institution’s community; and, 3) the number of campuses that must be visited by the Validation Team. Other costs may also vary depending on accreditation activities that are at the discretion of the individual institution.

The following chart serves as a worksheet for institutions in determining the costs for accreditation using *AFG* over the seven-year accreditation term. Items shown in **BOLD CAPITALS** are dues and fees charged by and paid directly to the Middle States Association and for which an invoice is provided. Other items shown are at the discretion of the institution.

For the current dues and fees charged by MSA, visit the MSCES (www.ces-msa.org), MSCSS (www.css-msa.org/resources/forms.html), and/or CIWA websites (www.ciwa-msa.org) or contact the appropriate Middle States office.

Annually

ANNUAL DUES <i>**Annual dues and accreditation fees are set separately by the two Commissions. Dues are based on the size of the institution and are subject to change. Please contact the appropriate Commission office for a current list of dues and fees.</i>	\$
Team Service <i>**The professional development experience of serving on Validation Teams is available and encouraged every year. However, some institutions find it beneficial to send more representatives during the preparation phases of hosting their own visits. While no specific cost to the sending institution is charged, many find the need to budget for costs of substitutes for absent staff members.</i>	\$

Prior to and in the Year of Self-Study

Workshop Attendance <i>**There are no separate charges for attending overview workshops, but costs may be associated with travel to the nearest location for staff members. Middle States does offer some workshops for a fee to those institutions who desire additional guidance on such topics as Action Planning, etc. The schedule of workshops is included on the MSCSS website at www.css-msa.org/workshops.</i>	\$
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In the year of Self-Study

<p>EVALUATION PREPARATION FEE <i>**Charged every seven years (usually in the fall of the self-study year. This fee includes the cost of self-study materials, attendance at overview workshops, building and managing the Validation Team, training of team chairs, preparation and editing of the written team report, and managing the Mid-Point Review visit, and preparation/editing of the report.</i></p>	\$
<p>Preparation of the Self-Study Document <i>**The institution may incur the normal internal costs of developing and maintaining its growth and improvement plan and preparing for the Validation Team’s visit. Some institutions hire an external facilitator to assist in the planning process. Others utilize district staff to facilitate. Institutions might conduct teacher/student/ parent/community surveys as a part of their internal scanning process.</i></p>	\$

In the Year of the Validation Team’s Visit

<p>Pre-Visit by the Team Chair <i>**The pre-visit is for part of one day and seldom requires an overnight stay. Therefore, the amount is usually for travel costs. These costs are paid directly to the Team Chair.</i></p>	\$
<p>Validation Team Visit <i>**The amount will vary based on local costs for hotel and meals, the distance team members must travel to the institution, and other variables. Typically, individual institutions will host a five person team for 3½ days. There will also be costs associated with copying, binding, and mailing the Self-Study Document for Validation Team members and others.</i></p>	\$
<p>Secretarial costs <i>**The Team Chair might require secretarial services to compile the Validation Team’s report. The maximum allowable for such services is \$250.00.</i></p>	\$

In the Years Between Validation Team Visits

<p>Annual Review <i>**Although no specific fees are associated with reviewing the progress of the plan or updating it to reflect new ideas, institutions should consider the costs of meeting, communicating, documenting, and celebrating the progress made on the plans each year.</i></p>	\$
<p>Mid-Point Review <i>**This visit takes place at the 2½ year juncture of the seven-year accreditation term. This visit seldom requires an overnight stay and usually involves travel costs only.</i></p>	\$
<p>Workshop Attendance <i>**Middle States offers numerous workshops for a fee that are aimed at providing institutions with additional assistance in such topics as Data Driven Decision Making; Maintaining the Momentum, etc.</i></p>	\$

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