



The School District of

SOUTH ORANGE  
& MAPLEWOOD

525 Academy Street • Maplewood, NJ 07040

# Columbia High School

Report to the Board of Education

February 2, 2015

Update: Middle States Accreditation

# What is accreditation?

Accreditation is an external, objective validation of school quality and student achievement that fosters continuous school improvement.

## **Profile of A Middle States-Accredited Institution:**

- Adheres to the Middle States Standards for Accreditation;
- Uses its mission, beliefs, and goals as the basis for daily decision-making;
- Operates in the public interest and in accordance with ethical practice;
- Accepts responsibility for the level of performance of its students;
- Remains committed to continuous improvement in student learning and to its capacity to produce the levels of learning desired and expected by its community;
- Operates in a collegial and collaborative way with all of its stakeholders;
- Sustains its focus on implementing recommendations, addressing monitoring issues and correcting stipulations that may be part of its notification of accreditation and
- Fulfills its maintenance requirements to the Commission.

[http://www.msa-cess.org/RelId/606525/ISvars/default/What\\_is\\_Accreditation.htm](http://www.msa-cess.org/RelId/606525/ISvars/default/What_is_Accreditation.htm)

# Our Process

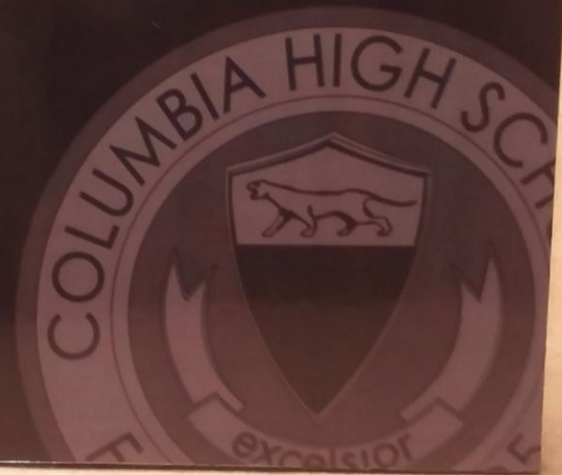
- CHS is using the “Excellence by Design” protocol established by the MSA
- Yields a 5- to 7-year strategic plan that lays out work that stakeholders determine is the future of CHS
- Process is *dynamic* and *responsive*
- Plan will shape the work that PLCs (Professional Learning Communities) will put in place to advance the strategic plan and track administrative support of its implementation
- Middle States facilitates a 3-year, mid-point review of our plan

# Why go through this process?

- The Middle States accreditation process affords Columbia a framework for self-reflection. Beyond that, the visitation and subsequent observations that are made by the team serve to *validate the excellence in practice and outcomes* that allows us to join our peers as Middle States-accredited schools.

Columbia  
Learning  
Lab

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# To date:

- Since spring 2013, CHS administrative team has been in regular contact with MSA
- Principal Aaron attended MSA meetings in Philadelphia in July 2013
- E. Aaron, Assistant Principal C. Ezell served as visiting team members of a three-day visit to Memorial HS, West New York, NJ
- C. Ezell & teachers S. Cohen, and J. Kaiser: completed internal coordinator training
- S. Cohen, J. Kaiser as visiting team members to a school
- All processes are in place and the work is underway for a fall 2015 visit to CHS by an accreditation team.

# Excellence By Design (EbD)

- Is a template/framework for self-study
- Includes a review of:
  - Columbia's Foundational Documents
  - 12 MSA-CESS Standards
  - Development of a *Plan for Growth and Improvement*
- The self-study process typically takes between 9 months and 2 years.

# Our Structure for EbD

- **Design team:** (coordinates the internal study)
  - Teachers as leaders of the process
- **Committees:** (collect and process for capacity assessment)
  - Leadership comes from the teachers (committee chairs)
- **Operations team:** (supports committees in their work)
  - Liaisons: identify needs and gather data, trained teachers in Google Docs
- **Stakeholder Engagement**
  - Parents and guardians, students, community partners, civic partners
- **Action teams** (Post-Study)



# The 12 Standards

- Facilities
- Finance
- Governance and Leadership
- Health and Safety
- Information Resources
- School Improvement Planning
- School Organization and Staff
- Student Life and Activities
- Student Services
- Mission
- Assessment and Evidence of Student Learning
- Educational Programs

# Key Elements of the EbD Work

- **12 Areas:** Allow us to ask key questions about curricula, facilities, teacher development, student achievement, STEM, arts, athletics, instruction, assessment
- Pathways to college and career readiness
- Student choice *for* and *on* those pathways
- ***What are and where are our strengths?***
- ***What are and where are our areas for growth? How will we implement strategies and programs for that growth, and how will we measure our success?***



# Our work so far

- Professional Development Days
- Tuesday meetings – CHS staff and departments
- CHS admin team mtgs (weekly)
- Mission development (faculty meetings)
- Facilities conversations (faculty and dept mtgs)
- Budget development meetings with Business Administrator and department chairs
- Organization into committees
- Data collection
- Intra-web site



The whole staff is doing tremendous work. These teachers have taken on added roles of leadership:

- Scott Cohen
- Jerry Kaiser
- Gwen Karl
- Sisina Wilson
- Mia Degioia
- Eugene Pollioni
- Manuel Arguelles
- Clark Faulkner
- Allan Tumolillo
- Abiodun Banner
- Meghan Power
- Phil McCormick
- Jon Campbell
- Ben Hershfield
- Nicole Martelli
- Bill Gaines
- Kate Dodd
- Jenna Vecchione
- Lynn Stradford
- Amanda Buckley
- Kristie Thomas
- Joshua Enyeart
- Falynn Balassone
- Julia Leider
- Pam Noonan
- Adria Kelley

# Teacher and Staff Voice

- “Why don’t we...”
- Key issues for CHS in teaching and learning:
  - Danielson Framework
  - Achievement Gaps
  - Student emotional, mental, and social health
  - Creating a school that prepares students for work, life, careers we do not yet even know exist
  - **EbD requires teachers to be the voices of the strategic plan and the guardians of it as it rolls out**

WL

Abolish  
EXAMS



# By September 2015...

CHS will have developed a 5-7 year Strategic plan contains **5** strategic goals:

- 2 related to student performance
- 1 related to organizational structure
- 1 related to facilities
- 1 to be determined

# Conversations @ Columbia



December 2014  
and January 2015





# COLUMBIA: 2025

**What do we want CHS to look like in 10 years?**

**Last time we addressed the problems. Now, we start fixing them.**

“If you can’t fly then run, if you can’t run then walk, if you can’t walk then crawl, but whatever you do, you have to keep moving forward.” – Martin Luther King, Jr.

In honor of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, come discuss your ideas on how we can improve as a school community with regards to race and student life. All are welcome.

During Periods 5, 6, and 7 in the Black Box Theatre

*Conversations at Columbia: Friday, January 16<sup>th</sup>*

# Community Engagement

*Every school event – a chance for parent/guardian voice, student and family feedback and input, engagement and participation in the EbD process:*

Back to School Night (October 2014)

Robotics Tournament at CHS (November 2014)

9<sup>th</sup> grade preview night (December 2014)

Fall and winter sports and club events

Advanced Placement Information Night (January 2015)

Arts Events (5 events, fall and winter 2014-2015)

PARCC information night (January 2015)

Martin Luther King, Jr. local events (January 2015)

Parent meetings (Monthly HSA, other groups)

IEP Meetings (ongoing)

504 Meetings (ongoing)

CORE Team Meetings (ongoing)

I & RS Meetings (ongoing)

# Proposed Spring 2015 Conference

**GOAL:** Bring parents, guardians, students, teachers, community members, civic partners in the same room to engage in the following tasks:

- **TASK #1:** Focus on the Past
- **TASK #2:** Focus on the Trends Affecting our Future
- **TASK #3:** Focus on the Ideal Future
- **TASK #4:** Focus on the Common Ground
- **TASK #5:** Focus on the Action Planning

# Looking Ahead: October 2015

- 3-1/2 day site visit to CHS (Pre-visit with visiting team chair and CHS team occurs first)
- 3-4 people on the visiting team
- Team has access to our plan, supporting documents, visits classes, meets with parent group, meets with students
- Presents preliminary findings to staff at end of visit
- Visiting team feedback informs how we go forward – external feedback gives closure to process, begins circle and cycle of improvement
- MSA sends final report early 2016