

Middle States Accreditation for Growth

St. Croix Country Day School is accredited by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, the primary accreditation association for both private and public schools in a region that includes the eastern United States and the Caribbean. We follow the *Accreditation for Growth* protocol because *AFG* focuses on increasing the performance of students. Using strategic planning as a vehicle for school improvement and growth in student performance, the *AFG* process requires the school to establish objectives for improving student performance based on a vision of a preferred future for the school. Therefore, *AFG* is a future oriented and visionary process. In addition, the *AFG* protocol provides for continuous review of programs and services and of the results of student performance.

In this era of accountability, student performance is and should be the essential focus of educators. In the *AFG* process, the following five questions guide the school's inquiry.

Question #1: What should students know, and how should they be able to use what they know? What content, process skills, and work habits should be priorities?

Question #2: How well should students perform and what does excellent performance look like?

Question #3: How will we assess and evaluate student performance?

Question #4: How well do students currently perform? What is the actual quality of their work?

Question #5: What will we do to improve student performance?

Here at Country Day, we have used the Accreditation for Growth protocol since 1999 to help us to recognize areas of concern, develop strategies for improving our programs, and measuring our success. During these years we have established many initiatives and have been successful in making significant improvements in the following areas:

1. Language Arts: The language arts goal was one of our original objectives. The goal was for 85% of students to score a minimum of 18 on the ACT English subsection. In 2006, 97% of the students scored achieved that goal.
2. Health and PE: This initiative was to improve health and health awareness of our students. The initial objective was to have students in grades 4-12 demonstrate their improved physical fitness, as measured by at least 35% of them attaining a score of average or above average on the President's Council National and Presidential Fitness Test. We added additional courses for students, including health, pilates, weight training, advanced fitness. We achieved our goal.

3. Mathematics: Our objective was to have 90% of our graduating seniors attain a score of 19 or better on the mathematics section of the ACT Assessment Test. This has been achieved.

More recently we established additional initiatives that are works in progress. These include the following:

1. Foreign Language Instruction;
2. Writing and Information Literacy;
3. Public Speaking;
4. Life Skills.

In our next community update I will give you a more detailed description of the objectives of the above-mentioned initiatives and keep you posted on how well we are doing.

We appreciate your support.