SYSTEM CLIMATE AND ORGANIZATION STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION

A.   SELF-ASSESSMENT OF THE INDICATORS OF QUALITY

The school system must meet this Standard for Accreditation to be granted "Accreditation" by the Middle States Association. The Indicators of Quality for the Standard identify the types of evidence that, when taken together, indicate whether the school system meets the Standard. Rate the degree to which the school system meets each Indicator by using the following scale:

Rating of Adherence to the Indicator	
1. **Does Not Meet**	The evidence indicates the school system **does not meet** the expectations of this Indicator
2. **Partially Meets/In Need of Improvement**	The evidence indicates that the school system **partially meets** the expectations of this Indicator and **is in need of improvement**
3. **Meets**	The evidence indicates the school system **meets** the expectations of this Indicator
4. **Exceeds**	The evidence indicates the school system **exceeds** the expectations of this Indicator

Middle States Association Accreditation Standard
System Climate and Organization

The Standard: The school system's organizational structure and climate facilitate achievement of its core values as expressed in the philosophy/mission. The school system's culture supports successful implementation of age- and developmentally appropriate educational programs and services. Roles, responsibilities, expectations, and reporting relationships are clearly defined. Administrative, instructional, and support staffs are qualified, competent, and sufficient in number to effectively provide quality educational experiences. The school system regularly conducts staff performance appraisals and offers professional development opportunities informed by its philosophy/mission. Relationships among the staff and leadership are collegial and collaborative.

6.1 – 6.21: Indicators for the school system

MSA Indicator of Quality	Rating			
	1	2	3	4
6.1 The school system's design, organization, climate, and leadership support attainment of the system's philosophy/mission.				X
6.2 Designated, qualified leadership provides coordination, supervision, and direction for the educational program, student services, and student activities				X
6.3 A logical and clear table of organization for the school system includes written job descriptions that specify levels of responsibility and reporting relationships.			X	
6.4 Administrative, instructional, and support staffs are qualified, competent, and sufficient in number to meet the needs of the total educational program, student services, and student activities.			X	
6.5 School system staff members possess the qualifications of education, preparation, experience, and commitment that contribute to the system's success. Staff members are assigned to work by reason of their training and expertise.				X
6.6 Staff members, including administrators, are assigned to work based on their education, preparation, experience, expertise, and commitment to the school system's success.				X
6.7 The school system's leadership and staff work cooperatively to create a climate for teaching and learning that fosters the attainment of the school system's philosophy/mission.			X	
6.8 The school system implements written personnel policies and procedures for the operation of the system and makes them available to all employees.			X	
6.9 The school system implements written policies			X	

Self-Study Report
Profile of Organizational Capacity – System Climate and Organization Standard for Accreditation
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MSA Indicator of Quality	Rating			
	1	2	3	4
and procedures for determining adequate compensation, arriving at reasonable workloads and acceptable working conditions, and defining just and fair treatment for all members of its staff.				
6.10 The school system implements written policies and procedures for evaluating staff performance. Performance appraisals are conducted with the knowledge of the staff member and reported in writing as well as verbally. Results are used to make professional development recommendations. Staff members have an opportunity to discuss and appeal their appraisals.			X	
6.11 Staff members are provided opportunities to offer input into the content of their professional development programs.			X	
6.12 The school system implements written policies and procedures for handling complaints/grievances by members of the staff.			X	
6.13 The school system implements written policies and procedures for orienting and mentoring new staff members.			X	
6.14 The school system implements written policies and procedures to ensure that service providers not employed by the system are appropriately oriented, supervised, and supported.			X	
6.15 The working environment for the staff promotes collegiality, high expectations, trust, support, and recognition for accomplishments and contributions.			X	
6.16 Professional satisfaction and good general morale characterize the school system's staff.			X	
6.17 Staff members are committed to the school system, dedicated to their work, and take pride in the outcome of their efforts.			X	
6.18 The leadership encourages staff members'			X	

MSA Indicator of Quality		Rating			
		1	2	3	4
	affiliation with professional organizations.				
6.19	The school system's families and community demonstrate commitment to, pride in, and support for the system through participation, promotion of its mission, and financial support.				X
6.20	Members of the staff, students, and their families feel safe in the school system.				X
6.21	A clearly defined, written code of student conduct supports an environment that is conducive to learning and is understood by students, staff, and families. The code is enforced fairly and uniformly.			X	

6.22 – 6.24: Indicators for school systems with an early age program

X	**These Indicators are not applicable to our school system.**

6.25 – 6.35: Indicators for faith-based school systems[1]

X	**These Indicators are not applicable to our school system.**

6.36: Indicator for school systems that provide all or part of their educational program by a distance modality

X	**These Indicators are not applicable to our school system.**

MSA Indicator of Quality	Rating			
	1	2	3	4

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[1] The use of the Faith-Based Indicators for this and the other Standards for Accreditation by faith-based school systems is voluntary and not required, unless their use is directed by the head of a parent school system such as a Diocesan/Archdiocesan or a similar system of schools. The Faith-Based Indicators allow faith-based school systems, if they desire, to include in their self-study and accreditation process Indicators of Quality that address unique characteristics of and expectations for schools whose mission and educational program are defined wholly or in part by their particular faith.

MSA Indicator of Quality	Rating			
	1	2	3	4
6.36 Appropriately qualified faculty members participate in distance-learning tasks including grading student work, telephone consultation with students, academic counseling, course revision, and development of study guides.				X

6.37 – 6.39: *Indicators for all Pennsylvania public, independent, and faith-based school systems*

	These Indicators are not applicable to our school system.

MSA Indicator of Quality	Rating			
	1	2	3	4
6.37 The school system has and implements a written policy that requires all applicants for employment with the system, including employees of independent contractors but excluding employees who do not have direct contact with students, to undergo the following background checks prior to being hired or contracted: a. Pennsylvania State Police Request for Criminal Records Check; b. PA Department of Public Welfare Child Abuse History Clearance; and c. Federal Criminal History Record Information (CHRI) from a FBI fingerprint-based background check.[2]				X
6.38 The school system has and implements a				X

[2] Act 114 of 2006 (state law) specifies that all applicants for employment with public and private schools including employees of independent contractors, but excluding employees who do not have direct contact with students undergo background checks noted in Indicator 6.11. In addition, Act 114 extended the background check requirements to include student teacher candidates prior to their field experience. Student teacher background check reports are to be submitted to their higher education administrator.

MSA Indicator of Quality	Rating			
	1	2	3	4
written policy that requires the system to review applicants' required background check reports prior to their being hired or contracted to determine the fitness of the individual to work in a position in which s/he will have contact with children.				
6.39 The school system has and implements a policy that requires the system to keep on file copies of the required background check reports for all staff hired or contracted on or after April 1, 2007.[3]				X

6.40 – 6.58: Indicators for component schools
Does not vary from the system.

A.1.   Stakeholders' comments to support the ratings:
Our survey did not have comments.

STANDARD: System Climate and Organization	
Source of Comments	**Comments**
Central Administration and Staff	• •
Governing Body	• •
Community Stakeholders	• •
Component School #1	
• **Staff**	• •
• **Students**	• •
• **Parents**	•

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[3]   Act 114 of 2006 and the PA Public School Code, Section 1-111 requires public and private schools to keep a copy of each background check report for each staff person hired on or after April 1, 2007 for the duration of time the individual is employed by that school. This also applies to school contractors.

STANDARD: System Climate and Organization	
Source of Comments	**Comments**
	•
Component School #2	
• **Staff**	•
	•
• **Students**	•
	•
• **Parents**	•
	•

A.2. Evidence:

X	**There were no Indicators for this Standard that were rated 1 (Does Not Meet)**

B. SELF-ASSESSMENT OF THE STANDARD FOR ACCREDITATION

X	Our self-assessment is that our school system **MEETS** this Standard for Accreditation
	Our self-assessment is that our school system **DOES NOT MEET** this Standard for Accreditation because it does not meet or meets only partially the Requirement(s) of the Standard and/or the Indicator(s) of Quality indicated below:

Requirement of the Standard		**Does Not Meet**	**Meets Partially**
Indicator Number	**Indicator**	**Does Not Meet**	**Meets Partially**

B.1. **Identify in the table below any component school for which the ratings for this Standard and its Indicators of Quality differ significantly from the system's average rating.**

Name of Component School: None
Describe the degree to which this school's performance differs from the average for the system:

C. ROOT CAUSE ANALYSIS

Foundational Issue: Planning for Growth and Improvement		
Are there system climate and organization standard indicators not met or in need of improvement that inhibit the attainment of the organizational capacity objective?		**YES**
	X	**NO**
Data to support your conclusion:	• Survey results • Written Policies available on the website	
Hypothesis derived from your conclusion:	Southern Lehigh School District has a positive climate and our teachers and staff work together to maintain it. Given these unprecedented economic times, there is still work to be done because we can no longer afford to offer some of the things we have in the past. We will continue to work as an organization to balance the needs of our district with fiscal responsibility.	

C.   IMPLICATIONS FOR PLANNING

C.1.   List the school system's significant strengths in meeting the System Climate and Organization Standard.

Strong sense of community among the teachers and staff.
Strong support from our community

C.2.   List the school system's significant areas in need of improvement in meeting the System Climate and Organization Standard.

None

C.3.   Based on the strengths and areas for improvement identified, list any important next steps or strategic priorities related to System Climate and Organization that should be included in the action plan in the Plan for Growth and Improvement.

Continue to openly communicate about our current fiscal reality and the impact that it has on our decisions regarding the district.
Continue to maintain the positive climate that currently exists in our district. Prioritize this as a topic of discussion for the administrative team as a group and with their building faculties.

E.   EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT THE ASSESSMENT OF THIS STANDARD

Evidence	
For the All School Systems:	
Resumes of the school system's leadership	X
Table of organization reporting relationships for the school system	

Evidence	
Job descriptions for the school system's leadership	X
Salary schedules and descriptions of benefits packages for the school system's administrators, teachers, specialists, and support staff	Agreements and Policies
Employee contracts (e.g. union, collective bargaining agreements)	Agreement
Results of any climate survey	See Survey Book
Instruments used for evaluating the performance of the school system's staff	X
The school system's professional development plan	See Act 48 plan in the Strategic Plan
Policies related to school climate and organization, including (but not limited to):	
• Development and approval of policies	014
• Compensation of school system employees	
• Determining reasonable workloads and acceptable working conditions for the school system's employees	
• Evaluating the school system's staff	412, 412.1
• Complaints and grievance by school system employees	019
• Orienting and mentoring new members of the school system's staff	
• School system's employees' membership in professional organizations	433
• Expectations for employee conduct, including (but not limited to) sexual and other forms of harassment	448
• Code of conduct for students	218
• Student-teachers ratios at all levels of the school system	
For Faith-Based School Systems:	
Evidence that…	
• The integration of faith, life, and culture in the school system	
• The programs of study, activities, athletics, codes of conduct, and discipline actions reflect the religious values expressed in the system's foundational documents	
• Opportunities provided to the faculty to advance its understanding of the religious beliefs and foundational documents of the school system	

Self-Study Report
Profile of Organizational Capacity – System Climate and Organization Standard for Accreditation
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Evidence	
• The school system provides regular professional development opportunities for the spiritual development of the faculty and staff as religious leaders in the system's community of faith	
• Prayer and/or other expressions of faith are integral components of the school system's curriculums and daily activities	
• Students play an appropriate role in planning, organizing, and conducting the school system's faith-based experiences	
• The criteria for hiring personnel include an assessment of the candidates' understanding of and commitment to the foundational beliefs and mission of the school system	
• The criteria for performance evaluations of the faculty and staff include understating of and commitment to the mission and beliefs of the school system	
For School Systems That Provide Distance Education:	
Evidence that appropriately qualified faculty members participate in distance-learning tasks including grading student work, telephone consultation with students, academic counseling, course revision, and development of study guides.	X
For All Component Schools:	
Results of the schools' self-assessments of compliance with this Standard fir Accreditation and its Indicators of Quality	