

## ORAL REPORT – Quigley Catholic High School

Welcome! We're glad you are all here for our report. This oral report represents the thinking of our entire Team, not just George's ideas.

Now we know you are accustomed to discussion and open dialogue, and up until now we have asked for questions and discussion. However, I will read the team report, to curb any temptation to *ad lib*, and when I am finished, we will head home—no Q & A, no discussion. I know it sounds abrupt, and it is. But we don't want to get in the way of your opportunity to celebrate. Besides, there will be plenty of time for discussion and reflection when you have received the approved report from Middle States.

At the outset, I want to recognize and thank publicly the other members of our Team for their service to you and to the Middle States Association—Kara Grise', Father Scott Jabo and Tom Sullivan, who couldn't stay. This is an outstanding team of educators. I don't know if you are aware of this, but they are volunteers who have given their professional and personal time to provide this service to you. The team members were all strangers to each other before we came together at the hotel at noon on Monday. Since then, we have definitely bonded as a team. Kara, Father Scott and Tom have worked hard day and night to conduct as thorough an evaluation of your school as is possible. It is a tribute to their professionalism and expertise that they were able to come together with me as a team so quickly and to produce such fine work in service to your school. I believe you owe them your thanks for their service to Quigley Catholic High School.

It is important that you remember that accreditation is a voluntary activity. We are here because you invited us. You asked us to study the work that you are doing and your plans for the future. Therefore, we came here with several purposes.

First, we were charged with ensuring that Quigley Catholic meets the Middle States Standards for Accreditation.

In addition to meeting the standards, the protocol you chose, *Designing For Growth*, requires that you have a system of continuous planning for school improvement. It also requires that you develop goals for improving areas of student performance and that you create plans to achieve those goals. The expectation is that, after our team departs, you will faithfully implement your improvement plan over the next seven years and make a good-faith effort to achieve the objectives you set.

First I'd like to tell you what the Middle States guidelines require me not to tell you today. I cannot tell you anything specific about our detailed findings and recommendations, and I cannot answer any questions about our visit.

I'm happy to report that the first draft of our team report is written. Once it is assembled and edited, your Principal, Mrs. McCormick will have the opportunity to check it confidentially for factual accuracy. She will send me any corrections that need to be made. I will make the corrections and send the revised copy to the Middle States office. There, it will be analyzed by a staff person and reviewed by the Domestic Schools Advisory Committee, by the Commission on Elementary and Secondary Schools and, finally, by the Middle States Board for final approval. In a few months, Mrs. McCormick will get the written report to

share, as she determines, with the community here. At that point you will have the official decision of the Board of the Middle States Association.

So now here's what I can and will tell you about our findings:

I will share with you (1) what our Team considers your outstanding strengths, (2) your areas most in need of attention, as well as (3) our Team's overall recommendation in terms of accreditation.

**Here's what we see your Outstanding Strengths:**

+ A warm, energetic, purposeful and joy-filled atmosphere that makes students, staff, families and visitors all feel welcome... Your commitment to the school's mission is impressive... The deep sense of the spirit of your mission is a palpable presence here.

+ A visionary team of administration and faculty with the skills and energy to drive Quigley on into the 21<sup>st</sup> century as a model Catholic high school.

+ Your pioneering effort with Cyber Days.

+ A dynamic, exemplary program that is true to your mission, and that is ever-evolving to develop and incorporate the latest best practices to meet the educational and spiritual needs of this community of talented young people.

+ The passionate commitment to the Quigley Catholic mission that is evident in all the people with whom we interacted and observed.

+ This beautiful and well-equipped facility and the surrounding grounds.

## **The Major Areas we see as in need of attention:**

~ While each of your Objectives and Action Plans has baseline data and clear seven-year goals, they all lack a stepwise process you will use to assess progress toward achievement of the Objective during the seven intervening years. As you have developed rubrics to evaluate performance in curricular areas, each Action Plan can include rubrics that describe progress at each step along the way and will enable you to monitor progress toward fulfillment of the goal.

~ This feature of planning would also strengthen the school's overall Strategic Plan. The Plan does include goals and projections, but lacks some of the components of a comprehensive strategic plan. The Team suggests that Quigley explore the feasibility of adopting a fully comprehensive strategic planning process.

Knowing your penchant for seeking excellence, we understand that the more important the issue, the more you want to make sure to "get it right." Since the three Objectives and the overall planning for the future of the school are critically important, we are convinced, having come to know you all, that you will do all you can to address these issues as thoughtfully as possible.

Furthermore, as I have shared with some of you, we will be recommending that Quigley be accredited. But remember, it is a recommendation only. It will be official only when the Middle States Board approves it.

We hope our report will be helpful to you as you continue on your trajectory of continuous improvement in this exceptional Catholic educational adventure.

On behalf of our entire Visiting Team, Kara, Fr. Scott, Tom and me, I want to express our gratitude to all of you and the entire Quigley community. You have warmly welcomed us into your lives here. You have taken superb care of us both here and at the Holiday Inn Express Hotel. We feel as if we are now members of the Quigley family. We appreciate the candor with which you have shared your pride in your school, your concerns and your greatest wishes.

You have an extraordinarily effective program here at Quigley Catholic. We heard testimony countless times from students, parents and staff at all levels asserting that Quigley changes people for the better, not only as learners, but also as confident young people of faith. Both parents and students told us how well Quigley prepares its students for college, not only academically, but also in terms of confidence and time management, both essential for continued success in college, work and life in general.

We saw many examples of exemplary student-centered teaching, and we were happy to witness clear and rapid learning progress happening before our very eyes. As one of your parents said, "the teachers here don't just teach but do everything possible to be sure that the students are learning."

Another theme that emerged in all our meetings with students, parents and teachers was the sense of a close-knit community at Quigley. We have observed here a climate of mutual respect, shared values and productive energy. The care and concern that you, the faculty, staff and administrators, have for your students is palpable. You are appropriately proud of your students. At all times as we

observed them, they were polite and respectful to us and to each other. Their pride in their school and their sense of emotional safety here to explore, to risk and to grow are in evidence always and everywhere. The way students and the staff treat each other is direct evidence that the school is living its mission.

Your self-study and your preparations for our visit were outstanding. Your Head of School, Rita, all the faculty, staff and students certainly have made us feel welcome. Special kudos to your Internal Coordinators, Kathleen and Renee, who led the self-study and orchestrated our visit beautifully, helped by many of you. We have been able to complete our work thoroughly and in a timely way because of the comprehensive and thoughtful effort you made to honestly examine every aspect of your program. As we discovered in writing our report, it was effortless to find commendations; we had to look harder to develop recommendations. Rest assured, we have made recommendations in the report, but don't be disappointed that there aren't more.

In closing, let me say that Quigley is clearly fulfilling its mission. Your facilities are appropriate for your work and beautiful, and more importantly they are cheerful and joyful places with a serious purpose. From the moment we arrived on Monday, we could feel the joyful essence of the Quigley culture. We have loved being here. We leave today knowing that we have had a full and rich experience of your school. We have learned much from you, much that we can digest and carry back to our own work.

We sincerely thank you for so fully and openly sharing your community with us. It has been a pleasure to be part of the Quigley Catholic High School during the short time we have been here.

----May God bless you all....