

**MIDDLE STATES ASSOCIATION OF  
COLLEGES AND SCHOOLS**

**COMMISSION ON  
SECONDARY SCHOOLS**



**REPORT OF THE  
*ACCREDITATION FOR GROWTH*  
VALIDATION TEAM**

**EASTERN Center for Arts and Technology  
Willow Grove, Pennsylvania  
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## INTRODUCTION

**T**he Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools is a non-governmental, nonprofit, peer-administered organization of diverse educational institutions committed to the highest quality education for students. Its purpose is to ensure the continuous improvement of its member schools through effective leadership, self-study, peer evaluation, accreditation, exemplary programs, and supportive services. For more than 75 years, the Association has provided leadership in school improvement for its member schools in six states in the United States, the Caribbean, Europe, the Middle East, the subcontinent of Asia, and Africa.

*Accreditation for Growth (AFG)* is a unique accreditation process that uses strategic and site-based planning as vehicles for school improvement and growth in student performance. The process, developed by the Commission on Secondary Schools (CSS), Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, provides linkages between district and site planning efforts. The primary determinants of progress are actual student results rather than the input of resources. *AFG* requires the school to base its objectives on a vision of a preferred future and thus is a future-oriented process. *AFG* provides for a continuous review of programs and services and allows diverse constituent groups to participate in charting the future of the school.

The *Accreditation for Growth* process requires that the school meets CSS standards. A school site plan, developed by a planning team of representative stakeholders from the school and community, should be consistent with the vision of the district's strategic plan. It should contain the following components: mission, beliefs, two to four measurable student performance objectives, and action plans that detail activities, timelines, individuals/groups responsible, and resources provided to accomplish these objectives.

In addition, a planning process should be in place that will ensure that the school has both the capacity and the will to implement its action plans. The planning process typically includes an internal coordinator responsible for monitoring the plan, procedures for communicating planning activities to the school community, provision for annual reviews of the plan, and one or more action plan teams responsible for implementing the plans.

By choosing *AFG*, EASTERN Center for Arts and Technology has made several commitments.

- 1) It has committed to focusing on the end result – improved student performance – as the primary priority for school improvement efforts.
- 2) It has committed to operating from a vision of where it wants and needs to go with the mission and beliefs serving as a unifying force for change.
- 3) It has committed to including a varied spectrum of stakeholders in the process of continually defining a preferred vision, in developing the means to get closer to that vision, and in implementing action plans developed by these stakeholders.
- 4) It has committed to a process where progress will be continuously reviewed.
- 5) It has agreed to participate in a peer review and external validation process by accepting outside visitors.

The Middle States Validation Team is a group of professional educators appointed by the Commission on Secondary Schools to visit a school using the *Accreditation for Growth* process. The purpose of the team visit is threefold. First, the team assesses the planning processes used by the school in developing the plan; the team determines the school's adherence to planning requirements as outlined by the Commission as well as whether the planning processes will ensure continuous improvement and commitment. Second, the team reviews the content of the school's plan to judge the validity and clarity of the plans along with the level of commitment to implementation. Finally, it is the team's responsibility to review the school's maintenance and implementation of the CSS standards.

The five members of the Validation Team to EASTERN Center for Arts and Technology used the three and one-half day visit to review written documents regarding the plan and its development. The Team interacted with as many of the school's stakeholders as possible regarding their knowledge, understanding and support for the plan. The groups interviewed included the internal coordinators, the Joint Operating Committee (JOC), staff, administration, student leaders, a randomly selected group of students, the Planning Team, supervisor of buildings and grounds, a number of business and education partners, and student activities coordinators. The Team concluded that it had a full and rich experience of the school leading to the following report and assessment.

## CONTEXT OF THE SCHOOL

EASTERN Center for Arts and Technology is located in Willow Grove, Pennsylvania, an affluent suburban area north of Philadelphia. The school operates on one compact campus, consisting of one building, which houses administrative offices, conference and meeting rooms, and technical shops. A stand along building adjacent to the main building houses the Landscaping program. The campus covers an area of one acre. A major renovation of the facility was authorized in 1983, and the renovated facility was dedicated in November of 1984.

Founded in 1966, EASTERN draws students from nine member school districts. The school districts include: Abington, Bryn Athyn, Cheltenham, Hatboro-Horsham, Jenkintown, Lower Moreland, Springfield, Upper Dublin, and Upper Moreland. These communities reflect an upper middle class demographic, and are among the highest median household incomes in the Commonwealth. Academic excellence is valued by these communities, and a high percentage of high school graduates continue on for further education, many attending highly competitive colleges and universities. The area is also one of the fastest growing areas in the Philadelphia area and is a major employment center. The economy represents a variety of sectors, including manufacturing, retail, financial and insurance, as well as health care and education.

The school has developed a governance structure enhanced by numerous advisory and oversight boards. The longevity and commitment of members of the various boards and councils is exemplary, and definitely contributes to the strong culture of planning that is evident.

EASTERN has developed a very positive relationship with its member school districts. Area superintendents serve on the Administrative Advisory Committee (AAC) and spoke highly of the relationship between their schools and EASTERN. This same message was echoed by principals and guidance counselors from the area high schools. Positive communication exists between EASTERN and the schools helping to ensure that shared students receive a cohesive, holistic education. A counselor from a sending school commented, "When there are issues with students, EASTERN works very hard to please both the school and the students." One school representative observed that the districts are "participating districts", not sending districts".

The school serves 523 eleventh and twelfth grade students, of whom 351, or 67%, are male and 147, or 33%, are female. The student population reflects approximately 9% of the total available student population among the member communities. The student

population is 73.6% white, 21.3% African-American, 2.7% Hispanic, and 2% other. 38.4% of the population has been identified as students with special education needs. Student attendance averages 90% across all programs. Several programs have attendance rates of 95% or more. Attendance rates are comparable to those of participating schools for their eleventh and twelfth grade students. Student discipline is generally very positive, with few serious discipline infractions. Most infractions are minor and come from minor safety violations, inappropriate language and horseplay in the shops. No major crimes have been committed at EASTERN. The student body is supported by an administrative staff of 5 full time and 1 part-time administrator, 17 full-time and 1 part-time instructor, 6 student services staff, 5 full-time and one part-time paraprofessionals, and 11 full-time and 7 part-time secretarial staff. All instructional staff hold appropriate secondary level certificates, with one holding an emergency certificate. The instructional staff is quite stable, with 100% having been at the school for three years or more. Custodial and maintenance services are provided by contracted staff, an arrangement that has served the school well since the early 1980s.

Although enrollment has been fairly stable over time, EASTERN identified, through its Baldrige Self-Study, a potential threat to its future enrollment. The number of students in the area schools has peaked and is beginning to decline. Over the next three years, the cohort of available students is expected to decrease by approximately 13%, or more than 700 students. The decline in student enrollment is expected to continue in participating high schools for the next ten years. EASTERN recognizes that this decline in overall student enrollment has the potential to impact negatively on its future enrollment, and has taken proactive steps to promote its programs throughout the area schools and among parents. EASTERN has also taken positive steps to expand relationships with area colleges to offer dual credit to students for portions of their technical studies. School officials report that the expansion of these relationships has had a positive impact on both program enrollment and student interest in, and response to, the programs that carry dual credit.

Of the 287 completers in the Class of 2007, 21, or 9%, attended 4-year colleges or universities; 57, or 24.4%, attended junior or community colleges; 20, or 8.5%, attended other post-secondary technical school or business college; 57, or 24.4% entered the workforce, and 12, or 5.1% entered the military. The remaining 67, or 28.7% were either undecided or planned to continue their education but weren't sure where or what type of school.

Students who complete their studies at EASTERN attend a number of colleges and technical schools to continue their education. Among the schools most frequently selected by EASTERN students are Delaware State University, DeVry University,

Drexel University, Gwynedd Mercy College, Indiana University of PA, Johnson & Wales University, John C. Smith University, Kutztown University, LaSalle University, Penn State University, Art Institute of Philadelphia, Automotive Training Center, Baltimore International Culinary Institute, Bucks County Community College, Bucks County School of Beauty, CHI Institute, Collins County Community College – Texas, Community College of Philadelphia, EASTERN Adult Program, EASTERN Practical Nursing, Empire Beauty School, Frankford Hospital School of Nursing, Lansdale Beauty Academy, Manor Junior College, Montgomery County Community College, Northampton County Community College, Ohio Technical College, Penn College of Technology, Thaddeus Stevens School, The Restaurant School, and Triangle Technology – Bethlehem.

The campus is very orderly, clean, well-equipped, and safe. Students attend either a morning or an afternoon session. Transportation is provided by the sending school districts. If a sending school has an in-service day or is closed for some other reason, transportation is not provided and students must find their own way to school. Most students appeared able, and willing, to secure alternate transportation on days when their home schools were closed. Students take all their academic subjects, engage in sports and other after school and extra-curricular activities, and have lunch at their sending schools. Most students report they take two academic classes in a block schedule format at their home schools. They participate in two hours and forty-five minutes of technical instruction daily at EASTERN.

Career programs offered include the following: Allied Health, Air Conditioning and Refrigeration, Automotive Technology, Collision Repair Technology, Commercial Art, Computer Network Administration, Construction Technology, Cosmetology, Culinary Arts, Electrical Technology, Electronics Engineering Technology, Landscape Contracting, Protective Services, and Welding Technology. The Automotive Technology and Collision Technology programs are ASE certified, as are the instructors. The Computer Network Administration program offers certification in five computer networks. Culinary Arts prepares students for the Safe Serv certification, and Cosmetology prepares students for both the manicurist and the cosmetologist's licenses. Articulation agreements and dual enrollment programs exist with several local two and four year colleges and universities. Some of these agreements have been in place since 1987.

All incoming students to EASTERN are tested on basic mathematics skills. The test used is the ORBIT (Objective Reference Bank of Items and Tests). The ORBIT is a criterion reference test measuring 28 objectives published by McGraw/Hill. All students are tested on all 28 objectives. Mastery of the first 18 objectives is essential for entry into the

occupations for which EASTERN is providing training and required in order to receive a Certificate of Completion.

The NOCTI's Job Ready tests are administered to all twelfth grade students. These tests are designed to measure students' knowledge of basic processes, including identification and use of terminology and tools associated with their selected career technical area.

The relationship with the business community is exemplary. Business leaders from throughout the area communities have made long-term commitments to the school, serving on advisory and leadership boards, often for twenty years or more. Members comment that "they stay involved because they have seen their input treated with respect and their recommendations taken to heart and implemented".



# THE PLANNING PROCESS

EASTERN began its strategic planning process in 1995, and has expanded its commitment to planning ever since. It was the first technical school to use the *Accreditation for Growth* protocol for reaccreditation in 1998. EASTERN'S commitment to planning has led it to engage in the Baldrige process, a quality measure originated by the business community. In its third round of strategic planning, EASTERN has developed a mature and highly organized, cohesive and fully integrated planning process that guides its entire decision making. A culture of continuous improvement through effective strategic planning pervades the school.

The current strategic planning process has spanned 2 years and was based upon EASTERN's commitment to the continuous improvement paradigm. Every aspect of the process to develop the plan incorporated this thinking. During the process, approximately 70 school community members, engaged in a process to determine the current reality for EASTERN and to formulate a Strategic Plan for the next 5 years. The process included an assessment of the needs of EASTERN in the future and was based upon information garnered from the sending school districts, parents, faculty, students and members of the business community at large. A cross-section of stakeholders was interviewed and from that pool a team composed of stakeholders and school officials selected by seniority and position was constructed. There were three phases to the process. These phases were:

Phase 1- Self Study of Current Reality (The Baldrige Reports)

Phase 2- Strategic Goal Development ( The Action Teams)

Phase 3- Implementation and Monitoring

The Baldrige process, the strategic planning process and the *Accreditation for Growth* protocol were totally integrated, with one process informing all the others. Decisions made by the school are all informed by its various integrated planning strategies.

## The Planning Team

A Steering Committee comprised of EASTERN's Director, Chairman of the Joint Operating Committee and Chairman of the Executive Advisory Board (EAC) selected a group of stakeholder representatives. This group was established and served throughout the plan development to lend continuity and focus. Participants worked on teams to study and describe EASTERN's current reality. They were organized into seven teams corresponding to the seven categories found in the Malcolm Baldrige Award criteria. The Baldrige Award criteria were established in 1988 and represent a

“best practice” in continuous improvement for achieving culture change and organizational success.

In October 2007, a strategic planning retreat was held involving 37 participants, again selected to represent the stakeholder groups. They were charged with identifying the strategic goals for EASTERN over the next five years. The reports of the seven current reality teams, and the thematic issues that emerged from the assessment served as the background for the strategic planning retreat. These teams were Leadership, Strategic Planning, Student and Stakeholder Focus, Information and Analysis, Faculty and Staff, Education and Support and Organizational Performance. First, the retreat participants reaffirmed the mission, vision and key strategic documents that were established as part of the strategic planning process 5 years ago, and challenged the organization to go further in making them a reality.

Four goals were established and four committees of EASTERN faculty, students, parents, administration, members of the local business community, administrators and faculty from sending districts and parents were formed to analyze the goals and the timetable for which they would be measured. These committees, known as the Action Planning Teams, met publicly on many occasions and developed a plan which was approved by the Steering Committee and the JOC. The responsibility of implementing these goals was given to the Director. Each of these committees would have annual meetings to assess EASTERN’s progress over the five year period.

Upon review of the documentation of the minutes of the steering committee report and supporting interviews with the members of the committee, the process provided a sound methodology upon which a clear set of goals could be established for the future of EASTERN.

Committee members were selected at large and they represented all of the shareholders. There was a diversity of socio-economic groups. There was an open forum for discussion of all goals for EASTERN. Additional committees were formed from the Steering Group to analyze specific goals which were related to individual members’ expertise. Each of these committees met on repeated occasions to discuss assigned areas. Decisions were made democratically and dissention was overcome by group consensus. Any and all information was distributed with transparency to the public through invitation to meetings, web postings and open forums. Principal sending school administration and faculty were consulted and included. Members of the planning team exhibited support of their plan as evinced in a meeting with the Middle States Validation Team. A schedule of rotation of members was incorporated in order to address future attrition.

Goal statements are clearly displayed and are used to orient future staff, faculty, students and ideas into the action plan. The planning team is responsible for conducting annual reviews of each area. School successes will be disseminated to the public through web site postings, board meetings and notices sent to sending districts via newsletters.

As a result of this review, it has been observed that there is a commitment on the part of EASTERN to improve student performance in the years to come. Measurable benchmarks have been set and there is an adequate system to review and modify systems in order to reach these goals. The Director and the rest of the planning team have asked the faculty and staff to “look at the school from a different perspective”, one which encompasses the needs of not only the student, but also the needs and goals of parents and the community that the school serves. These goals, along with the vision and mission statement of the school comprise EASTERN’s E-Board, which will be posted and part of the guiding principles established by the planning process as the outline for the next five years.

### **Role of the Administration**

The role of the Administration, as described by the director, is to “provide staff, students and faculty with all of the tools necessary to attain the goals established by the Planning Committee”. Since the Director of EASTERN served on the board of the planning committee, he played a significant role in the development of policy. As a result of his participation in the planning stages, he has been charged with the future evaluation of the recommendations made by the planning committee and must report progress on an annual basis. The main focus of the director in administering the plan is to adhere to goal setting standards and action plans developed in the report. In order to have the greatest impact on the school, however, there must be an involvement of all of the faculty and staff that served in planning.

After review of the documentation of planning meetings and interviews with the administration, evidence has been found to support that the administration was directly involved with the planning of the report and will be instrumental in any adaptation or modification to the plan.

The administration is clearly charged with the implementation of the plan and is responsible to attain benchmarks described in the plan. The administration must document progress to the governing body of the school in an annual report. The

administration will provide adequate support and training for members of the Faculty in order to attain the 5 year goals of the Strategic Plan

### **Role of the Governing Body**

The role of the Governing Body or Joint Operating Committee, as described by its members and the director, is to ensure that of the goals established by the Planning Committee are addressed within the five year period defined by the Strategic Plan. Members of the JOC, as well as members of the sending school districts, were a primary component of the planning committees and share a commitment to the plan which they established. The plan was approved by the JOC as a whole and is reflective of the Mission Statement and goals established in the planning phase of the Strategic Report. Members of the Board will serve on review committees in future evaluations of success and modifications of the five year plan. A four committee board, known as the Action Planning teams, reviews progress based upon goals established at the Strategic Planning Retreat for evaluation of goal acquisition.

After review of the documentation of planning meetings and interviews with the JOC, evidence has been found to support that The JOC was directly involved with the planning of the report and will review and approve, if needed, any adaptation or modification to the plan. The JOC is supportive of the implementation of the plan and will require reviews documenting the success of the benchmarks in the plan. The JOC will recommend any changes based upon information presented by the administration in an annual report. The JOC will provide adequate support and training for members of the administration in order to attain the 5 year goals of the Strategic Plan. The Action Planning Teams will provide adequate assessment for goals of the Strategic Plan and offer recommendations to Director and JOC.

## **Role of the Internal Coordinator**

The Internal Coordinator position was awarded to the director and was outlined in his employment description. In assuming the role of Internal Coordinator, Thomas Allen was trained to complete this task by Middle States seminars. Since preparation for this review began two years ago, sufficient time and adequate resources were provided to accurately complete this assessment. As a member of the planning committee and administrator, the Internal Coordinator has sufficient knowledge of the Strategic Plan and was able to develop policy that would address the prescribed goals. He is responsible to the JOC and reports his progress annually. He is required to facilitate any programs or procedures that will allow EASTERN to fulfill its goals and mission described in the Strategic Plan. Motivation and training of staff and faculty are paramount in his ability to attain his prescribed goals.

After review of all documentation and interviews with the Internal Coordinator, staff and students, evidence has been found that the Internal Coordinator was determined by job description to be the Director. The Internal Coordinator has the ability and support to implement the Strategic Plan. The future implementation of any changes to policy will be evaluated by the Internal Coordinator, reported to the Administration and, if needed, approved by the JOC. The Internal Coordinator was sufficiently trained and provided with enough time to develop reports.

## **Role of the External Facilitator**

The original format for the development of the Strategic Plan involved an External Facilitator. This person was a contracted consultant and had developed the previous Strategic Plan for EASTERN. This person accepted another position while working on the Strategic Plan. The position was eliminated upon his departure.

## **Communication and Awareness Activities**

There are at least three distinct reasons for communication in the planning process. One is simply to *inform*, a second is to build *understanding*, and a third is to invite *input*. Stakeholders have a need and a right to know and be involved in what is going on in their school.

The success of the plan, however, is not dependent upon how many people know about the plan. More important is the degree of *shared understanding* about the key elements

of the plan, particularly among those stakeholders who must move from vision to reality.

The results of the review of this committee show ample evidence that all stakeholders, including faculty, administration, business in the community, students and sending districts were invited to offer input in the development of EASTERN's Strategic Plan. Verbal and written invitations to public meetings were distributed to all stakeholders on a regular basis. All meetings were open to the public and minutes and results of meetings were posted on the school website or offered in print form to all members of faculty, administration and parents of EASTERN and of all sending districts. Any written or oral responses were addressed at the next meeting. All notification was handled with transparency and received equal weight in the decision making process.

Based upon review by this committee, evidence exists that EASTERN has shown invitations to meetings and has made all planning notes a matter of public record. EASTERN has held public meetings for all planning activities after the retreat. EASTERN has posted its Strategic Plan, planning notes, Annual Reviews and committee reports on their website as a matter of public record.

### **Action Plan / Implementation Teams**

The Action Planning Teams were created to mirror the goals of the Strategic Plan established by the Baldrige Committees. Each team is responsible for its own subject area, which include enhancing student success, successful student recruitment, business involvement in program quality, and leadership succession. Each team evaluates progress of EASTERN in terms of the Strategic Plan and makes recommendations to the Director and JOC in an Annual Report.

Based upon investigation by this committee, evidence exists that network of review that corresponds to goals established in the Strategic Plan exists. Adaptations to the Strategic Plan can be made yearly and verified. The Strategic Plan is a living document that allows for growth to goals.

### **Annual Review Process**

Effective strategic planning requires that stakeholders understand and become involved in periodic review and updates to the plan. Key to continued improvement is a common understanding of when data are to be gathered, who will conduct analyses and how often those analyses are to occur, as well as what procedures will be used to make updates to the action plans in response to any analyses. While Middle States has

labeled this process an Annual Review, it frequently encompasses activities that happen more than once a year. Celebrations for success are often included and should be considered an integral part of any ongoing strategic plan.

The annual review process begins with a review of the faculty and staff by the Director. The Director utilizes data collected during the course of the year to measure student performance and success. After completing the yearly review, the Director makes any needed adjustments to realign the Strategic Plan. Any requests needing board approval are submitted by the Director to the JOC. Also the Executive Advisory Committee reviews the goals established by the Strategic Plan and assesses progress. Any modifications to the plan are given to the JOC and Director. The progress is communicated to all stakeholders through an annual report and the school's website.

Based upon investigation by this committee, evidence exists that an annual review process has been mandated by EASTERN's JOC. The results of this review will be made public in print form and on EASTERN's website. The review will examine the goals set forth in the Strategic Plan. Recommendations of the committee will be submitted to the Director and JOC for implementation in a timely manner.

## CONTENT OF THE PLAN

EASTERN has engaged in strategic planning for a number of years. This current plan reflects the school's third round of strategic planning. The planning process is informed by the Baldrige process and incorporates both the strategic planning required by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the Middle States Association of Schools and Colleges. All plans are integrated and inform and build upon one another.

### Relationship of AFG Plan to School Plan

Four (4) teams were formed and charged to develop action plans aimed at achieving each of the four goals. These teams worked from December 2007 to March 2008 and included over 70 individuals representing EASTERN's stakeholder groups. A person external to EASTERN was selected to lead each team.

In March, each team completed and submitted its reports for review. The original retreat team was reconvened to hear the presentations. All of the retreat participants in attendance at this meeting affirmed the goals and embraced the plans prepared by the action teams. In June, the PDE Strategic Plan was developed from the outcomes of the planning process. JOC approval was granted in August with submission completed in September. In March of 2009 Middle States conducted an On-Site review of the school for accreditation.

EASTERN has achieved a high degree of sophistication in planning and fully integrates its Baldrige review, its strategic planning process, the required Pennsylvania Department of Education Strategic Plan, and the requirements for the *Accreditation for Growth* protocol. Rarely is such a sophisticated and comprehensive planning process observed in a school setting. EASTERN has truly embraced a culture of continuous improvement through bold planning initiatives.

### Mission



A school's mission should reflect the school community members' deepest desires for what they want the school to become. Therefore, it is inappropriate for a Validation Team to fundamentally alter the direction or focus that the mission sets. The same is true of belief statements. Only members of the school community can define their vision and identify their deeply held beliefs.

A Validation Team can, however, offer an objective perspective on what is unclear or seems inconsistent or incomplete in these documents. Ultimately, it is the school that has to decide if the Team's comments are legitimate and relevant. It is in this spirit that the following observations on the EASTERN's mission and beliefs are made.

A mission statement should describe in broad and visionary terms what the school is and is striving to become. It should be outcome-based, providing clarity on the school's audience (whom it serves), its action (what it does), its aim (the purpose for which it exists) and its function (how, in broad terms, it will do it).

*The mission of EASTERN Center for Arts and Technology, a leader in technology and in developing innovative, responsive programs, is to equip all students with the skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary to select, enter and succeed in a career and to anticipate and adapt to change by providing high-quality technical instruction and specialized services.*

The mission was developed during the last strategic planning process, when it was crafted by a large number of stakeholders. During this round of strategic planning, the existing mission was reviewed, but was not changed. It was determined to meet the needs of the school in the present climate.

The mission clearly establishes the identity of the school as a "leader in technology and in developing innovative, responsive programs. It identifies the audience as "all students", an appropriate and fitting audience for the mission. The mission identifies the action to be undertaken as "to equip all students with the skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary to select, enter and succeed in a career" and "to anticipate and adapt to change". There is some lack of clarity attached to the statement "to anticipate and adapt to change" and whether that statement refers to the students or to the school. The Validation Team believes it applies to both and recommends that that portion of the mission be clarified. The aim is not clearly stated in the mission, although it was clearly articulated by numerous individuals with whom the members of the Validation Team spoke that the dual aims of the school are to prepare students for the work place and to prepare them for further training or education. The function is clearly identified as "by providing high-quality technical instruction and specialized services".

When students were asked if they could articulate the school's mission statement or if they had been involved in its review, they indicated they didn't know it and were not involved in its review. One student said "the school does it for us", which captured the notion of "all students" as the audience. It was noted that the mission statement does not appear in the Student Handbook, although it was observed that it was posted on the bulletin board in some of the shop areas.

It is the recommendation of the Validation Team that EASTERN review its mission statement and clearly establish its aim. It is further recommended that the statement about anticipating and adapting to change be clarified so that the reader clearly understands to whom or what that statement refers. It is also recommended that the mission be included in the Student Handbook and that students participate in future reviews and revisions of the mission statement.

### **Belief Statements**

Belief statements serve as the foundation of a strong strategic plan. They are the formal expression of a school's fundamental values and serve as its ethical code. Beliefs describe the moral character of a school. In a planning process involving diverse stakeholder groups, they represent the composite of the personal values held by individual planning team members.

Because belief statements are a matter of faith, not a matter of fact, they express the school's overriding convictions, its inviolate commitments. They outline what members of the school community are willing to "go to the mat" defending. Because beliefs identify the "line in the sand", they can be used as a lens through which to examine the worthiness of the school's potential decisions or future actions.

### **EASTERN's Belief Statements**

We believe that:

- Change is inevitable ... adaptation to change is essential.
- Lifelong learning is critical to survival.
- People affect their own future.
- People have the ability to change organizations.
- Attitudes affect performance and can be changed.
- Hope is a fundamental need of all people.
- All people have the desire to achieve.
- Each individual is unique.

- Each individual needs positive support to achieve.
- Every person has something to contribute to society.
- Cooperation and competition can contribute to growth.
- Expectations influence performance.
- Knowledge is power.

The belief statements are appropriate and reflect circumstances both internal and external to the school. They are sufficiently broad to extend beyond the school context and affect students throughout their careers and lives. It is evident that the belief statements were crafted with a lot of thought. They were developed by a large group of stakeholders which comprised the Planning Team. The beliefs were incorporated into the E-Board.

### **External Scan**

Application of the Baldrige criteria by a large number of stakeholders, both internal and external to the school, serve as both the internal and external scan of the school. Seven teams were tasked with applying the Baldrige criteria to EASTERN. The resultant report, titled *Current Reality*, identified the image and perception of EASTERN by stakeholders as the most significant issue facing the school. One of the evaluation teams commented that "EASTERN finds itself at the intersection between a long period of growth and maturation with a basically stable environment and a period when changes in EASTERN's environment have become, and are like to remain for some time, pervasive". Another major threat identified is a declining student population among the communities that make up the school's pool of applicants. The recent addition of a person responsible for public relations is geared, in part, to address the increased need to recruit students in a variety of ways and to address the shrinking pool of potential applicants.

### **Objectives**

The *Accreditation for Growth* process requires schools to have 2-4 measurable student performance objectives. EASTERN Center for Arts and Technology has developed the following three objectives that meet all Middle States criteria for AFG objectives.

#### **Objective #1**

*By 2014, students at EASTERN Center for Arts and Technology will demonstrate improved knowledge and skill development in their selected career preparation programs as measured by:*

