

# MIDDLE STATES VALIDATION TEAM FINDS "EXCELLENCE IN THE AIR" AT AQUINAS

Thursday, October 25, 2007 was the day for receiving the oral report from the visiting team who validated the results of Aquinas' two-years of self-study and planning in the process of Accreditation for Growth. Sr Margaret Ryan opened the session with a reflection on the history and mission of Aquinas:

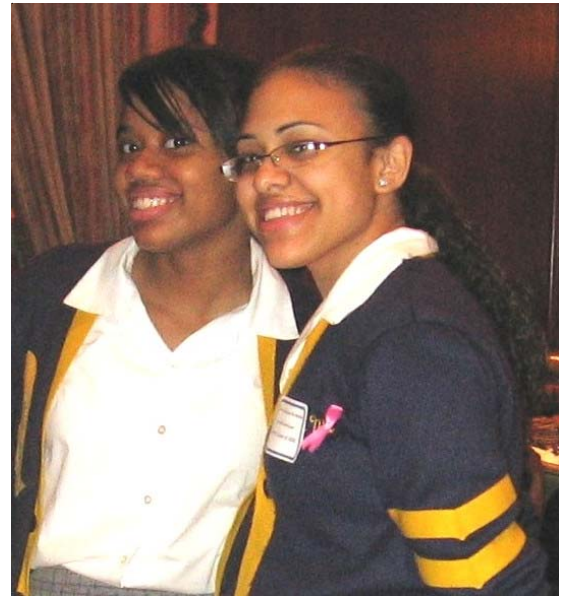
*Today we come together as members of this community to validate our membership in the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools. Since 1977 when we embarked on the first process and in subsequent re-accreditations, we have accepted the challenges of growth and continuous improvement.*

*As a community of faith and learning, we came together (in the self-study process) to revisit our Mission from which all else flows. The process was inspiring, rewarding and carries forward the vision of the Dominican Sisters of Sparkill. Through the decades each new wave of New York City's population has been welcomed at Aquinas, a challenging curriculum has been the norm, and graduates have been confident, knowledgeable and committed to building a better world.*

Living testimony to the truth of these latter words was presented by Seniors Devaneke Crumpler and Stephanie Rodriguez as they spoke about their Aquinas experience. Just a glimpse of their challenging courses, their rich extra-curricular life, and their ideals of service to the community were enough to demonstrate the fruits of Aquinas' mission.

Frank Brancato, Chair of the Middle States Evaluation Team, summarised the team's findings in the following words:  
*It is the opinion of the Validation Team that Aquinas High School meets all of the Standards outlined by the Commission on Secondary Schools. This is a beautiful and well-maintained facility that is now fully accessible. There is strong and forward-looking leadership. The Board of Trustees is committed to Aquinas High School and its mission for years to come. You are a dedicated and devoted faculty, and the school has an impressive array of appropriate and challenging educational programs and activities.*

*In addition to the Standards and other "Measure-ables" are the intangibles, those features of a school that can be sensed, felt, perceived but not placed in a column or on a checklist. There is an atmosphere at Aquinas high School that makes everyone feel welcomed and cherished as a child of God, worthy of reverence. Students and adults are empowered to become the people that they were created to be. Excellence is in the air, as the school's motto*



*Devaneke Crumpler and Stephanie Rodriguez '08 speak to the Validation Team about their Aquinas experience.*

*VERITAS draws the entire community to God who is TRUTH itself.*

In thanking the Validation Team, Sr. Catherine Rose said:

*Others are often instruments of grace in reminding us to be grateful for what we have. You served as a lens for us to see in new ways the poise, confidence, competence and loyalty to Aquinas which our students possess. And you recognized the joy, hope, belief and dedication of faculty and staff around the Mission.*

*The Accreditation for Growth Protocol was an enlivening, enriching and challenging process. The fruits of our labors will yield abundance in due time as we continue to vision a future of continued improvement and commitment.*

*Meister Eckhart, a German theologian of the thirteenth century, said: "If the only prayer we ever say in our entire life is 'thank-you' it will be enough. So...THANK YOU!"*