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NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS & COLLEGES, INC.
COMMISSION ON INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

February 21, 2019

Mrs. Carolyn L. Polselli
Principal
Venerini Academy
27 Edward Street
Worcester, MA 01605

Dear Mrs. Polselli:

At its February 4-5, 2019 meeting, the Commission on Independent Schools voted to grant Continued Accreditation by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges to Venerini Academy. The Commission has also requested a Special Progress Report addressing unmet Standard 14 (Infrastructure), due January 1, 2020, to be followed by a Staff Visit. This action will be reported to the Board of Trustees of the Association at its meeting on April 12, 2019.

In reaching its decision, the Commission reviewed the Self-Study Report and Visiting Committee Report. The Commission appreciates your cooperation in providing all necessary materials to assist in its review of your school for Continued Accreditation.

The Visiting Committee Report identified many areas for commendation. The Commission particularly commends the entire school community for its steadfast determination to recoup from a devastating financial loss ten years ago.

In addition, the Commission commends Venerini Academy for providing the school community with a vision and mission that exemplifies the Charism of Saint Rosa – “To educate is to liberate.”

Completing the Self-Study and hosting the Visiting Committee are major events in a school’s life. They are, however, only the first steps in the school improvement process, which is at the heart of accreditation by NEASC. Venerini Academy is positioned to take full advantage of the accreditation process by engaging the school community in responding to the several recommendations. You should move quickly to organize the school’s implementation of recommendations from the Self-Study, the Visiting Committee and the Commission.

You should also appoint a follow-up committee, consisting of both faculty and administration, to monitor and report on your progress and to assist in the preparation of the Interim Evaluation Report. This office would be happy to provide suggestions and support for the follow-up effort. Please call if you are interested in having a member of the staff visit the school to discuss how you might proceed.

It is the policy of the Commission that member schools must meet all Standards for Accreditation. If a school being reviewed for Continued Accreditation does not meet one or more Standards, it will be given one year to bring itself into compliance. The Commission requests a Special Progress Report due January 1, 2020, that addresses and documents compliance with Standard 14 (Infrastructure). A Staff Visit to the school will be scheduled following receipt of that Report.

Your next regularly scheduled evaluation visit will be in 2028. You will be expected to file a Two-Year Interim Evaluation Report, due April 1, 2021, and a Five-Year Report in 2024, at which times your accreditation will be reviewed. The form for filing the Two-Year Report is enclosed and is also available on our website at <https://cis.neasc.org>. For this Report you will be asked to provide basic information related to staff, programs, and finances, as well as a Long-Range Plan that integrates those items from Part II of the Self-Study and Visiting Committee Report. Specific narrative responses to the following major recommendations will be requested:

1. That the Board of Trustees develop a Long-Range Plan with representation from the different constituencies of the school. Included in this Plan should be goals and action steps for finances, curriculum, technology, facilities, marketing and enrollment. In addition, each action step should include persons responsible, timelines, financial implications and benchmarks.
2. That the Academy explore initiatives to increase enrollment, implement strategies for marketing the school, establish a greater presence in the community, and seek additional sources of funding.
3. That the Academy develop a written timeline for curriculum review and updates.
4. That the Academy institute and implement a formal evaluation process for the entire administrative staff. As part of this evaluation process, the Board should develop and implement a procedural policy manual outlining clear expectations for the function of the Business Manager.
5. That the Academy make the Crisis Response Plan accessible and available to faculty and staff, particularly those charged with supervision of students.

Please note that the Commission often edits major recommendations to make them more consistent with general Commission expectations and experience. This may include such steps as reducing the total number of recommendations, removing prescriptive elements, or recasting lengthy recommendations in a more succinct manner. In the Two-Year Report, please respond to the major recommendations as stated in this letter.

It is expected that any press release or school publication concerning the contents of the Visiting Committee Report will be a balanced representation and will cite recommendations as well as commendations. If any questions arise as to any aspects of the evaluation procedure or the expectations of the Association, please contact me.

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Venerini Academy

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The Commission would appreciate your help in evaluating the accreditation process. We have prepared an online survey and will be sending you a link shortly via email to the SurveyMonkey website. It takes just a few minutes to complete the questionnaire and your feedback will help to improve the accreditation process.

On behalf of the Commission and the Association, I extend congratulations to you and your staff. A Certificate of Continued Accreditation is enclosed.

Sincerely,



Jay S. Stroud
Director of the Commission

JSS:co
Enclosures

cc: Carrie Wilson, Chair, NEASC Visiting Committee
Visiting Committee Members
Sister Theresa Rose Carchidi, Provincial