



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

VISITING COMMITTEE REPORT

Venerini Academy

27 Edward Street
Worcester, MA 01605 USA

Mrs. Carolyn Polselli
Interim Head of School

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Grade 3 Teacher
Self-Study Coordinator

Mr. Paul Jourcin
Admissions Office
Self-Study Coordinator

Mrs. Stefanie Landgren
Grade 1 Teacher
Self-Study Coordinator

Ms. Carrie Wilson
Bishop John A. Marshall School
Head of School
Chair

Mrs. Maureen McCafferty
Mount Alvernia Academy
Vice Principal
Assistant Chair

10/21/2018 - 10/24/2018

Roster of Team Members

Chair(s)

Chair: Ms. Carrie Wilson

Head of School

Bishop John A. Marshall School

Morrisville, VT

Assistant Chair: Mrs. Maureen McCafferty

Vice Principal

Mount Alvernia Academy

Chestnut Hill, MA

VC Members

Mrs. Brandy Houle

Grade 2 Teacher

St. Mary Academy Regional School

Dover, NH

Mr. Michael Murphy

Lead Grade 5 Teacher

Nativity Preparatory School

Jamaica Plain, MA

Mr. Thomas Walsh

Grade 5 Teacher

The Saints Academy

Beverly, MA

Introduction

Founded in 1885, the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Inc. (NEASC) is the nation's oldest accrediting agency. Since its inception in 1885, the Association has awarded accreditation to educational institutions in the six New England states that seek voluntary affiliation.

The governing body of NEASC is its Board of Trustees which oversees the work of four Commissions:

- Commission on International Education
- Commission on Institutions of Higher Education
- Commission on Independent Schools
- Commission on Public Schools

The evaluation program which the schools undergo is a three-fold process: the Self-Study conducted by the school, the evaluation by the Visiting Committee, and the follow-up program carried out by the school to implement the findings of its own Self-Study (Part II), and the valid recommendations of the Visiting Committee and the Commission. The Commission on Independent Schools oversees the entire process.

Each school is evaluated in terms of compliance with the *Standards for Accreditation*, the quality of *Part II: Reflection, Recommendations, and Issues for Further Discussion*, and how well it is serving the needs of its students. Because each school is different, the base that undergirds the evaluation is the school's own statement of mission and core values.

School Data Sheet

Mission

The Venerini Mission

Venerini Academy serves God by Educating to Save and Set Free. In partnership with families, we develop the whole child through rigorous academics in a safe and respectful environment.

History and Culture

Our History

The Order of the Religious Venerini Sisters derives its name from its foundress, Saint Rosa Venerini, who established the first school for girls in 17th century Italy. The order came to America in 1909.

In September 1945, under the leadership of Bishop O'Leary, Mother Esther and Sister Maria Antoinette, Venerini Academy opened. Originally housed in three buildings, it began as a private Catholic boarding school and day school for girls with classes from elementary through high school.

Venerini Academy continued to expand and a new building was constructed in 1954 at the present site on Edward Street. In 1968, Venerini Academy became a co-educational elementary school with a modified Montessori Kindergarten. Venerini Academy graduated its last high school class in 1970. In 2009 and 2010 extensive renovations were completed to the physical plant that added much needed classroom space in our Early Childhood wing.

The Hallmarks of a Venerini Education

*Built on the cornerstone of **Faith, Knowledge, Respect, Humility and Service**, our academic and enrichment programs encourage the education of the whole process.*

Our Philosophy

Venerini Academy is dedicated to its students and their families. We seek to provide parental support in the child's life at school in order to reinforce the religious and moral values taught at home. The education at Venerini Academy is based on the Gospel message and provides a challenging curriculum in a Christian environment. The Academy fosters the intellectual, spiritual, physical, and social development of each child. The varied backgrounds of the Venerini students enable our community to appreciate and celebrate each other's culture as we grow as members of a caring community.

As a community of Faith, we give service through prayer, teaching and living out the Corporal Works of mercy. We encourage our students to be respectful and sensitive to the needs of others and to celebrate their faith by participating in liturgies and in prayer services throughout the year.

Process Followed by School

Venerini Academy has been working on the NEASC Self-Study for the past two years with the enthusiastic support of the faculty, the staff, the Board of Trustees and the Religious Venerini Sisters. All constituencies engaged in the process seriously, developing thoughtful and reflective responses to the questions posed in the guidelines. The Administration enthusiastically supported the Self-Study and provided the faculty with the time necessary to use this process to help move the school forward in the years to come. The NEASC report was

reviewed by the faculty, the staff, the Board of Trustees and Sister Teresa Rose Carchidi, Provincial of the Venerini Sisters. The strengths and areas of improvement have been noted and acknowledged. They will form the basis of an action plan as Venerini Academy moves forward. The NEASC Self-Study was co-chaired by Lisa Nelson, a veteran Grade 3 who has participated in two visiting committees and by Paul Jourcin, Admission Staff, Assistant Principal, and former French teacher. The co-chairs have met throughout the process and twice over the summer of 2018 to review and edit the report as well as to prepare for the Visiting Committee needs in October 2018.

Overview of School Findings

Venerini Academy enthusiastically participated in the NEASC for re-accreditation. Throughout the process, faculty, staff, administrators, Board of Trustee members and students expressed thoughts and shared ideas that have sculpted the responses to the 15 NEASC Standards. Time and again as the Venerini community grappled with the questions before them, long term faculty members shared: "Wow!" We have come so far since the 2008 Self-Study." Knowing where we come from is always a good place to start when a community of Faith and a community of educators takes a close look at who, what and where we are in preparing to write the next chapter in the history of this beloved school.

Venerini Academy is sponsored by the Religious Venerini Sisters whose Charism rests firmly on St. Rosa's challenge "to Educate is to Liberate". Led by talented, dedicated and professional members of the Board of Trustees and Sister Teresa Rose, Provincial of the Venerini Sisters of North America, the Principal and her Administrators are responsible for living out the Charism, providing for the good order and academic rigor of the institution and for developing a Vision to move Venerini Academy forward. The Mission is supported by the pillars of Venerini education: Faith, Knowledge, Humility, Respect and Service.

In 2008, in an attempt to renovate the former convent and transform it into much needed learning space, the Venerini Sisters engaged an advancement advisor to raise funds for the transformation. This ruthless scam artist duped the Venerini Sisters and Board of Advisors. A very public scandal followed. Through the generosity of the Venerini Sisters they used their retirement fund to sustain the multi-million dollar scam. The leadership of the school was reorganized, and in the months that followed the school moved forward mired in serious financial debt.

Regaining the confidence of the families who questioned the future of the school has been an on-going challenge. The global financial "Recession" from 2008-2013 further challenged the institution. This was followed by the Sexual Abuse Scandal in the Church's hierarchy, the decline in demographics that will continue to plague elementary, high schools and college until 2030. With the dramatic increase in tuition at private high schools and universities, parents began to invest their education dollars at a higher level.

Through the difficult period Venerini Academy has moved forward cautiously, slowly, but with purpose.

Over the past 9 years, under the leadership of Dr. Fredette and Mrs. Polselli, Venerini Academy has:

- * Maintained small class sizes that allow us to educate the whole child in an atmosphere that encourages rigorous academics, in a safe and respectful environment.
- * Continued to hire and retain talented dedicated faculty and staff who nurture the whole child.
- * Introduce I Pad technology
- * Refurbish 2 computer labs
- * Introduce the Empowering Writers Program
- * Adopt the use of Atlas Curriculum Maps at all grade levels.
- * Introduce Envision Math 2.0 K-5 and Big Ideas for 6-8

- * *Introduce Kodable for kids from Pre K 4- Grade 3*
- * *Partner with WPI in bringing the STEM and STEAM technology to the Middle School and from K-5 for the 2018-2019 school year.*
- * *Moving forward with the foundation to become a Google Classroom School.*
- * *Raise funds for professional STREAM development at WPI.*
- * *Purchase of 25 Chrome Books for a more inclusive STREAM ROBOTICS Program.*
- * *Significantly cut the budget over the past two years, substantially reducing our debt.*
- * *Fostering an Instrument Band Program.*
- * *Venerini Voices, using Constant Contact to communicate with parents, alumni and Board of Trustee members.*
- * *Introduce an on-line grading program through Teacher Ease to manage attendance, grade posting and communication.*

Like a phoenix, we have risen from the ashes while we are proud of our effort; we realize that monumental challenges lie ahead.

In addition to the positive findings, the Self-Study indicated there are areas in which Venerini Academy must improve as we move forward.

- * *Although herculean efforts have been made over the past 8 years to reduce the deficit, we must continue to aggressively find additional grant funding, seek advancement funds and continually turn the budget without sacrificing academic excellence.*
- * *Enrollment has continued to decline for many reasons (some alluded to above) Developing a plan to stem the decline and develop programs to increase enrollment is a major goal.*
- * *Finding time within the school day for teachers to collaborate horizontally and vertically is essential as we refine our curriculum and introduce innovative, challenging programs for students of all ages.*
- * *Updating our physical plant to enhance our curb appeal, better utilize existing spaces and cosmetically improve our appearance.*
- * *Engage the service of an Educational Marketing Advisor to help us better brand our school to young families throughout Worcester County and beyond.*
- * *Engage the services of a part time Advancement professional to enlist the support of donors, secure grant funding and organize fundraising events to bridge the gap between tuition and the real cost of a Venerini Education.*
- * *Committees will be formed to address the recommendations of the Visiting Committee.*

Legal/Regulatory Documentation

A copy of all applicable documents will be available to the Committee during their visit.

Introduction

Thanks to School

The Visiting Committee wishes to extend a heartfelt thank you to the community of Venerini Academy: Sr. Teresa, Mrs. Poselli, Mr. Jourcin, Ms. Nelson, the Board of Trustees, the faculty and staff, volunteers, families, and students. From the opening tour with the student guides to the welcoming reception, from the convenient hotel accommodations to the thoughtful culinary repasts, everything was done with care and concern. The warm welcome each of us received is a reflection of the true spirit of the school.

The hospitality from the Venerini Academy community was outstanding as each of our requests was met with a quick smile and a positive response. Please accept our gratitude for making the visit as informative and pleasant as it was. Your attention to the details made the Visiting Committee's stay flow seamlessly. Thank you.

The lovely gift bags, complete with personalized notes from students, will be a charming reminder of Venerini Academy and its wonderful story. May Venerini Academy continue to move forward successfully with grace, resilience, and resolve.

Overview of Team Findings

A well-loved school, Venerini Academy is embraced by the administration, faculty, staff, students, and families. With its clearly articulated mission, the school encircles all who join the community while the spirit of the school is embedded in all constituencies. Its philosophy to support the moral and religious values taught at home cements the partnership between school and home and is evident through the number of families and the interwoven relationships between and among community members.

Venerini Academy must remain true to its core pillars as it moves forward. With its religious foundation and solid curriculum, Venerini Academy has maintained itself despite difficult circumstances. Faith, hard work, and dedication on behalf of the community have enabled the school to overcome the circumstances which would have defeated others.

As Venerini Academy faces the future, it has more obstacles to overcome, but they are obstacles related to educating students for the future. It is a task for which the school has been preparing. Foremost among the challenges are enrollment, financing, scheduling. As the hard work, dedication, and focus of the past ten years has enabled Venerini Academy to remain viable, so too will that hard work, dedication, and focus enable them to move forward.

Standard 1: Mission

Standard

There is congruence between the school's stated mission and core values and its actual program, policies, planning, and decision-making at both the operational and governance levels.

Visiting Team's Assessment

Standard Met (SM1, SM2): The students' experience is supported.

Standard Unmet (SU1, SU2): The students' experience is compromised.

SM1. Standard Met: Evidences clear understanding, effective implementation and thorough planning for further improvement.

Narrative Summary

Brief narrative summary of the school's position with regard to this standard. Text copied from the school's *Self-Study Report* is in italics.

“Venerini Academy serves God by educating to save and set free. In partnership with families we develop the whole child through rigorous academics in a safe and respectful environment.”

The Venerini Academy Mission is at the heart of our core values, our academic and spiritual programs, our policies, our strategic plan and the decision making at both the operational and governance levels. Venerini Academy's school Mission Statement is built on the cornerstones of Faith, Knowledge, Respect, Humility, and Service. A collaborative effort supported by the Board of Trustees, the Administration, the Teachers, the students, their parents and the alumni value our vision of academic excellence and spiritual formation. The Mission Statement is clearly posted inside each classroom, recited daily, and prominently placed throughout the school for visitors, parents, and community members to clearly to read and reflect upon. It also can be found on the school's website, Admission information folders, and marketing material.

The Venerini Academy Vision:

Built on the cornerstones of Faith, Knowledge, Respect, Humility and Service that are the heart of a Venerini education, we strive to strengthen our partnership with our families, our teachers, our students, our community and Board of Trustees. As a people of faith and a community of learners, we strive to better understand and to integrate these hallmarks in the life of the school each day.

Faith: *Venerini Academy is a spiritually centered community that seeks to live the Gospel message through worship and the study of the principles of our faith. We welcome families of all faiths, encouraging them to join us in worship, and to share with us their cultural and religious identities. Through the inspiration of our Foundress, St. Rosa Venerini, we work towards actively proclaiming her charism: “To Educate is to Liberate.”*

Knowledge: *Venerini Academy seeks to educate the whole person: spiritual, academic, social and athletic. Challenged by a professional community of religious sisters and a faith-filled team of talented and dedicated educators, Venerini Academy helps students develop their personal gifts in a challenging, disciplined atmosphere. In each of our core courses and specials, our faculty fosters critical thinking, creativity and excellence in oral and written expression. A Venerini education encourages its students to be life-long learners and to take their place as productive members of society.*

Respect: *As a community of diverse racial, religious and economic backgrounds, a Venerini education is based on a respect for one's own unique gifts and an appreciation for the differences that form the intricate and diverse patterns of the Venerini tapestry. With respect as a formative value, Venerini Academy, realizing that safety of our students and staff is essential to our Mission, strives to maintain and secure environment based on vigilance and trust.*

Humility: *As a people of faith and a community of learners, we acknowledge that our talents, our strengths, our personalities and, even our weaknesses are gifts from God. In God our potential is limitless. Without God, we can do nothing. In a nurturing environment, that is sensitive to the needs of each student, our faculty helps nurture the strengths of our students and strengthen their weaknesses.*

Service: *Throughout their journey at Venerini Academy, our students are offered opportunities to serve the Venerini Family along with their local and global communities. It is our vision that, as children and as young adults, they become engaged leaders, confident enough to rely on their moral conscience to help society make informed decisions. Inspired by the wisdom of the Holy Spirit, we hope that, throughout their lives, they will actively work to promote the equality of all members of the body of Christ. This vision, built on the cornerstones of Faith, Knowledge, Respect, Humility, and Service, must be a collaborative effort supported by the Board of Trustees, the Administration, the Students, Parents, and our Alumni who value Venerini Academy's vision of academic excellence and spiritual formation.*

Observations

The mission of Venerini Academy, last updated in 2012, is stated clearly and is visible to all constituencies; the wording of the mission is congruent with its Catholic identity and is reviewed, involving integral members of the community. The school community is engaged in living out its mission and is continually seeking ways to further the mission with regard to its identified pillars: faith, knowledge, respect, humility, and service. The school's climate and culture promote an effective overall program. All members of the school community - from students to staff to the governing body - embrace the mission and work to support its implementation through school requirements and expectations that are clearly communicated. The overall culture of the school is the result of the collaborative efforts of the contributing members; all embrace and promote the mission with purpose and dedication.

The Visiting Committee noted that the student guides on the Sunday evening tour were well-versed in the school's mission and its meaning. The mission is present throughout the school, and each student at the school understands and lives the mission in an age-appropriate way. The promotion of kindness is ever-present in the school by adopting the 365Z program; kindness quotes are read each morning for inspiration and kindness books are available for classroom use.

According to parent survey results, 94% of participants feel the school's mission is clear and well-communicated. Just under 80% of parent survey participants note that the school's mission matches what is actually happening in the program.

Conclusions and Explanation of Rating

Through the Self Study and the Visiting Committee's observations, it is evident that the mission statement is the foundation upon which Venerini Academy's culture and climate is built.

Commendations

Venerini Academy provides its students, faculty, staff, and community members with a vision and mission that exemplifies the Charism of St. Rosa: "To educate is to liberate." The dedication of the Religious Venerini Sisters maintains this charism, and its vibrancy permeates the entire school community.

Standard 2: Governance

Standard

The school has an appropriate system of governance that assures that the school remains true to its mission and that it has the necessary resources to support its present and prospective operations.

Visiting Team's Assessment

Standard Met (SM1, SM2): The students' experience is supported.

Standard Unmet (SU1, SU2): The students' experience is compromised.

SM2. Standard Met: Evidences understanding, evolving implementation and planning for improvement.

Narrative Summary

Brief narrative summary of the school's position with regard to this standard. Text copied from the school's *Self-Study Report* is in italics.

Venerini Academy is a non-profit private Catholic elementary school located in Worcester, Massachusetts that educates children from Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 8. Prior to the 2008 NEASC accreditation, Venerini Academy was governed by the Venerini Sisters, a religious order founded by St. Rosa Venerini, and supported by an Advisory Board. The decline in the membership of the Venerini Sisters and an unfortunate agreement with a development consultant, who defrauded the Venerini Sisters in a multi-million dollar scam, resulted in a change to the governance of Venerini Academy. The Venerini Sisters adopted a model of governance that provides for a shared ministry with committed members of the laity to the mission of the Venerini Sisters.

*The Venerini Sisters and members of the Laity formed a Board of Trustees to govern Venerini Academy. The powers and duties of the Trustees are best described in the appended by-laws. *The Principal of the school is the executive officer directing the daily operation of the Academy. A collaborative Multi-year Strategic Plan administered by the Principal is currently ongoing. Committee members (board, administration, faculty, parents and alumni) are engaged with priority issues: enrollment, finances, communication, curriculum, facilities and advancement. They are currently working on innovative recommendations to strengthen and revitalize the Academy as an Exemplary Catholic School.*

Observations

The governance of Venerini Academy is developing, in the aftermath of a financial setback. Since the setback, the Board of Trustees has shifted its role from an advisory board to a governing board, which provides greater oversight of the school and its operation. The board meets monthly, and the Principal provides a Principal's report at these meetings. The board allows the Principal with authority, providing her with the decision-making powers necessary to lead the school. Currently, the board is working on a comprehensive, multi-year plan with guidance from an educational consultant. This preliminary plan seeks to establish a platform from which to build a more formalized plan to re-imagine Venerini Academy, working to envision "What can Venerini Academy be?" The board plans to hire a full-time Development Consultant or a part-time Advancement Director to assure adequate financial resources and database management to continue to grow the program.

The governance structure of the school starts with the Congregation of the Venerini Sisters. They are the primary leaders of this school and hold complete power over all constituencies. The Congregation approves changes in corporate documents, approves mergers and dissolutions, and establishes mission. The Congregation appoints Members who in turn appoint trustees, control corporate documents, make recommendations for mergers, dissolutions, and encumbrance, and the review of mission effectiveness. The Board of Trustees appoints the chief administrator, establishes policy, sets and approves the budget, and establishes auxiliary committees. Trustee terms are four years with the opportunity for re-election to successive terms. The board does not have formal officers, other than an interim chair. The other members do not have specified roles. It was noted in the interview with the board that the "secretary" of the board is actually the school's secretary, who keeps copies of the minutes. The treasurer was identified by the board as the school's business manager; though when interviewed, the school's business manager stated she was not the treasurer.

It has been noted that there will be significant leadership changes ahead for Venerini Academy. The current Principal and Assistant Principal along with the current interim board president, will be vacating their positions at the end of the current academic year. This represents a pivotal time for Venerini Academy. As the board begins its process for selecting new members, it should be cognizant of the need for orientation and evaluation procedures.

The Board of Trustees has just begun the process of creating a multi-year plan. They are still in the very preliminary stages of this undertaking.

Conclusions and Explanation of Rating

Venerini Academy is to be lauded for overcoming significant challenges with committed leadership. However, to position itself for continued success, it is imperative that Venerini Academy gives serious consideration and prompt attention to each recommendation.

Commendations

The Visiting Committee commends the Board of Trustees for undertaking a significant task with noteworthy commitment and love for the school. It is very apparent that the current board and administration are committed to the success of the school and are working collaboratively for the continuity of the mission. It is clear that the Catholic identity is central to those overseeing the school; this identity is woven throughout the many facets of the school's culture. The Board of Trustees, in conjunction with the administration, work hard to establish and monitor school policy while modeling integrity and inclusive behavior.

Recommendation 1

The Board of Trustees must develop a multi-year strategic plan, with representation from the different constituencies of the school.

Recommendation 2

A timeline is needed to prioritize initiatives--principal search, strategic plan, the hiring of an Advancement Director, database management, finances, and an expanded board with designated roles.

Recommendation 3

The Board of Trustees must formalize the regular evaluation process of the principal and assistant principal and those with administrative roles.

Standard 3: Enrollment

Standard

The admissions process assures that those students who enroll are appropriate, given the school's mission, and are likely to benefit from their experience at the school.

Visiting Team's Assessment

Standard Met (SM1, SM2): The students' experience is supported.

Standard Unmet (SU1, SU2): The students' experience is compromised.

SM1. Standard Met: Evidences clear understanding, effective implementation and thorough planning for further improvement.

Narrative Summary

Brief narrative summary of the school's position with regard to this standard. Text copied from the school's *Self-Study Report* is in italics.

Rooted in the Charism of St. Rosa Venerini, Venerini Academy provides the foundations of spiritual and moral leadership that inspire our students to better understand the Gospel message and to actively proclaim it in thought, word and deed.

For more than 70 years, the Venerini Sisters and a faith-filled team of lay women and men have challenged our students from Pre K 3 through Grade 8 to develop their personal gifts in a nurturing, disciplined environment that inspires creativity and critical thinking.

With the student enrollment of about 235 students, Venerini Academy draws from more than 20 communities throughout Worcester County. The families from the city of Worcester make up more than 50 percent of our student body.

Venerini Academy is the only private Catholic elementary school in the Diocese of Worcester that serves Pre K 3 through Grade 8. For the past three years, Venerini Academy has been voted runner up in the category of Best Elementary School by the Worcester Telegram and Gazette "Best of..." "Opinion Poll.

Observations

Venerini Academy presents an accurate description of its mission, organization, staff, program and facilities in all public relations materials. All materials reviewed show an accurate portrayal of what Venerini Academy offers and the mission driving the school. It is clear that the Admissions Office thoroughly discusses the mission with prospective families.

Venerini Academy uses clear procedures and materials for new student enrollment, including a probationary period to ensure an appropriate fit between the prospective student and the school. Although there is not a formal profile of a Venerini Academy student, the Admissions Director strives to determine a student's compatibility with the school through a variety of formal and informal assessments.

Through the admissions process, prospective students are tested on grade readiness using developmentally appropriate standards. Parents of an applicant who participates in an IEP, 504 Plan, or other education plan meet with the administration to discuss these learning differences. The Admissions Office seeks information on the academic, behavioral, and social strengths and weaknesses a student may have. This information is then communicated to teachers, who meet with a student before enrollment.

The school offers limited financial assistance to families who struggle with tuition. Parents can apply to the Diocese of Worcester for tuition assistance through the FACTS Tuition Management Program. For a student to continue receiving assistance, he or she must continue to live up to the mission of Venerini Academy. These policies and procedures are stated on the website and in public relations materials.

The Admissions Director undertakes an analysis of the reasons students depart prior to graduation through written exit interviews and in-person conversations with parents and students. This information is shared with the Principal and the Board of Trustees.

Venerini Academy uses several means for increasing and encouraging enrollment including the use of social media, a school website, open houses, and printed signs. Venerini Academy students are visible in the community as they visit nursing homes, volunteer at food pantries, food and clothing drives, and offering donations from funds raised by student council.

Conclusions and Explanation of Rating

Venerini Academy presents the mission of the school exceptionally well to prospective families. The enrollment process works to ensure that interested students have the opportunity to benefit from all that Venerini Academy has to offer.

Commendations

Venerini Academy's admissions process works to ensure that prospective students will benefit from their experience of the mission and program offered. Communication among appropriate staff, relative to prospective students' talents, strengths, skills, and needs, is exceptional.

Recommendation 1

Venerini Academy should explore initiatives to increase enrollment, acquire strategies for marketing the school, and establish a greater presence in the community.

Recommendation 2

Venerini Academy should encourage the soon-to-be-hired Advancement Director to explore additional means of tuition assistance for families.

Standard 4: Program

Standard

The school provides a comprehensive program of intellectual, aesthetic, and physical activities that is appropriate to support the school's mission and core values, and is consistent with the needs of the range of students admitted. Program planning is informed by relevant research regarding how students learn and the knowledge and capacities they will need to lead purposeful and constructive lives.

Visiting Team's Assessment

Standard Met (SM1, SM2): The students' experience is supported.

Standard Unmet (SU1, SU2): The students' experience is compromised.

SM2. Standard Met: Evidences understanding, evolving implementation and planning for improvement.

Narrative Summary

Brief narrative summary of the school's position with regard to this standard. Text copied from the school's *Self-Study Report* is in italics.

Venerini Academy is a small, private, Catholic elementary school that provides an enriching, nurturing learning environment for students from Pre K 3 through Grade 8. Venerini offers a comprehensive curriculum of intellectual, aesthetic, spiritual, athletic and social activities that is sensitive to the individual needs of each student, challenging them to be open to St. Rosa's Charism: "To Educate is to Liberate". Our teachers and staff partner with the parents in developing the whole child through "rigorous academics in a safe and respectful environment."

Observations

The school provides a comprehensive program of intellectual, aesthetic, and physical activities that is appropriate to support the school's mission and core values, and is consistent with the needs of the range of students admitted.

Professional development is available for faculty through the diocese, Worcester Polytechnic Institute and new program implementation. Capturing common planning time during the day has proven to be a challenge. There are bi-weekly meetings for middle school faculty, held before or after school, to discuss students, curriculum, collaboration. The lower school meets less formally, sometimes during lunch, to discuss students and program. There is a STREAM committee that meets with WPI instructors four times a year and monthly in school. Differentiation is made in instruction and/or expectations throughout the school. Math and science classes in the middle school are leveled. Religion classes are a major subject, meeting five days a week, in accordance with the school's religion curriculum.

The Catholic identity of the school is incorporated throughout Venerini Academy. St. Rosa's motto, "To educate is to liberate", is a constantly referred to in the classrooms. Students' faith is expressed in culture and arts. The Spanish and art teachers are collaborating on a Day of the Dead art activity. The French and art teachers

collaborate on projects for special events. The Christmas Pageant involves all the students in celebrating Jesus' birth in drama and song.

The school has a Curriculum Specialist who has been instrumental in bringing in a new math and writing program. Venerini Academy demonstrates continuity in its math and writing programs through the implementation of Envision Math, Big Ideas, and Empowering Writers. Venerini Academy is revising its science curriculum to align with Massachusetts' Next Generation science standards through its connection with Worcester Polytechnic Institute. Venerini Academy teachers utilize Atlas Rubicon for curriculum mapping across all content areas. Currently, a timeline for curriculum review and updates does not exist. It is not clear how Venerini Academy will align its reading curriculum across grade levels. While the self-study report referenced a running writing portfolio for students for students Pre-k 3 through grade eight, they are not found consistently throughout the grades. In addition, application of differentiation varies from classroom to classroom.

Venerini Academy thoughtfully transitions students between grade levels and divisions within the school. On "Move Up Day", teachers introduce themselves and their expectations to their incoming students, while giving those students the opportunity a preview of the year ahead.

Venerini Academy's teachers choose materials and create lessons that reflect ethnic and cultural diversity. For example, the music teacher introduces world cultures through music, creating specific units. Family members are encouraged to participate in these units.

83% of parent survey participants feel that the school provides a comprehensive program of intellectual, aesthetic, spiritual, and physical activities that serve the interests of the students.

Conclusions and Explanation of Rating

The students at Venerini Academy are receiving a top-notch education. Their teachers are passionate and highly qualified; they work tirelessly to provide their students with the knowledge and skills necessary for future success. While great strides are being made in the area of curriculum upgrades, Venerini Academy would benefit from a deliberate plan that systematically outlines review and updates across all content areas.

Commendations

Venerini Academy is to be commended for their implementation of STREAM throughout the school, as well as their work in updating the science curriculum to align with Massachusetts Next Generation Science Standards, facilitated by their highly-qualified Curriculum Specialist.

Recommendation 1

Venerini Academy should develop a written timeline for curriculum review and updates.

Recommendation 2

Venerini Academy should consider utilizing the Curriculum Specialist and teaching professionals to streamline the reading curriculum across grade levels.

Recommendation 3

Venerini Academy should consider utilizing the many resources (text, people, program) available to the fullest, such as maintaining student portfolios to assess longitudinal growth.

Standard 5: Experience of the Students

Standard

The school actively considers individual students and has developed plans, policies, programs, and pedagogy to nurture, support, and encourage all students to reach their potential and to participate in the life of the school.

Visiting Team's Assessment

Standard Met (SM1, SM2): The students' experience is supported.

Standard Unmet (SU1, SU2): The students' experience is compromised.

SM1. Standard Met: Evidences clear understanding, effective implementation and thorough planning for further improvement.

Narrative Summary

Brief narrative summary of the school's position with regard to this standard. Text copied from the school's *Self-Study Report* is in italics.

In the spirit of St. Rosa and her Mission "To Educate is To Liberate," Venerini Academy sees each of its students as uniquely created for purpose by a good and loving God. Continuing to foster St. Rosa's philosophy, Venerini Academy has developed programs to nurture each of its students to develop his/her full potential. Although teachers, at various grade levels, do not have a communal planning period, teachers get together at mutually convenient times, before and after school, as well as during professional days to set goals for each class level and to discuss individual student's progress.

Teachers rely on the Admissions Placement assessments, Terra Nova Standardized tests, unit tests, quizzes, projects and presentations to assess the students' progress. Grades 4-8 use Teacher Ease to take attendance, and record grades so the parents may access their grades to determine if the child is working up to his/her potential.

Parents with students in K through grade 3 receive printed interims and trimester report cards that communicate a student's progress by means of predetermined rubrics. Pre K teachers meet with parents formally twice a year to explain classroom goals and to communicate how these goals are being achieved. Parents may request informal meetings with the teachers if they have questions or concerns.

Students with IEP's or 504 plans may apply for admission to Venerini Academy. These plans are reviewed by the Principal and grade level teachers to determine what accommodations can be made. Parents may request that their children be CORE evaluated by the Public School System in their home town. Venerini Academy will allow students with special needs to arrive late in the morning or be dismissed before school ends for special services.

Venerini Academy encourages all students to take an active role in their school community. These activities may include: competitive sports, sports clinics, Ski Club, Chess Club, community service, student lead prayer services and liturgies. Student Council and the National Junior Honor Society organize fundraising activities, service opportunities and spirit days.

Observations

Venerini Academy strives to consider the individuality of each student. The school's programs and pedagogy encourages students to reach their God-given potential. The school's program has the adaptability to recognize diversity among its student population who may require additional support. The school has conducted surveys of students, parents, and faculty regarding the students' experience. This information is used to inform program planning. 70% of students surveyed agree that the school takes into consideration their needs and style by providing appropriate programs and activities. Students are active participants in many in-school masses and prayer services, as altar servers, lectors, and choral accompaniment. Masses are celebrated on every Holy Day of Obligation; class-led masses are held regularly in the chapel, which is attached to the school. Student Council at the middle school level offers both leadership and service opportunities. The school's Catholic identity is also evident in its religion curriculum, its service activities, and prayer throughout the day. It is consistently seen and heard throughout the school. Through conversations with the Board of Trustees, administration, teachers, parents, and students, the Visiting Committee finds that Venerini Academy seeks to recognize and develop uniqueness in each individual student.

Common planning time is available for some teachers. Collaboration can take place informally during lunch, or it can be a bi-weekly scheduled meeting (middle school) before or after school. There are scheduled grade level meetings in middle school, but more informal meetings in the other grades. One middle school teacher expressed a wish for vertical meetings for her content area. Teachers expressed a desire for more deliberate common planning time.

Report cards, progress reports, parent/teacher conferences, Teacher Ease, and NWEA are in place to assess and report on individual students goals in the program with regards to both personal and academic growth. Adults and/or students who will need additional support are identified through changes in the school's programs.

Through the admissions process, the school works to enroll students for whom the school is appropriate. Middle School math and science teachers offer after school support to practice high school entrance exams. Currently, there is no formal school counselor employed, however, the school nurse, who holds a degree in psychology, often acts in place of a school counselor. Additionally, teachers are very supportive of their students' needs.

While the school promotes an inclusive community, it would be beneficial to explore ways to honor and celebrate multicultural aspects of the school and greater community.

Conclusions and Explanation of Rating

Venerini Academy is a place where students are happy, learning, and beacons of light in their community.

Commendations

Venerini Academy is a caring community that nurtures the academic, emotional, spiritual, physical, and personal success of its students. The teachers and administration showcase their commitment by helping students of all ability levels reach their highest academic potential. Venerini Academy is a prayerful place that calls students to grow in their knowledge of faith.

Recommendation 1

The school should explore the possibility of a licensed school counselor.

Recommendation 2

The school should reflect upon ways to honor and celebrate multicultural aspects of the school and greater community.

Standard 6: Resources to Support the Program

Standard

Given the school's mission, there are adequate resources (space, equipment, technology, materials, and community) to support the school's program.

Visiting Team's Assessment

Standard Met (SM1, SM2): The students' experience is supported.

Standard Unmet (SU1, SU2): The students' experience is compromised.

SM2. Standard Met: Evidences understanding, evolving implementation and planning for improvement.

Narrative Summary

Brief narrative summary of the school's position with regard to this standard. Text copied from the school's *Self-Study Report* is in italics.

Venerini Academy has adequate instructional facilities that are age appropriate and allow students to learn in a safe and respectful environment. Each grade has self-contained classrooms which have desks, chairs, white boards, and materials needed to promote desired learning. Apart from the classrooms, Venerini has two fully equipped computer labs that are split between different grade levels, giving the lower and upper grades more time to work in the lab. Both computer labs and classrooms have wired and wireless internet access. Special instructional classes such as Art, Music, French, Spanish, Library and Physical Education have their own individual classrooms. This allows the instructors and students to get the most out of each class. In September 2017, in partnership with WPI, Venerini Academy began to integrate a STEAM/ROBOTICS Program into the Middle School curriculum. To provide the dedicated space for the students to build their robots and to program them to perform tasks, a classroom was retrofitted adjacent to the grade five classroom. For 2018/2019 the Robotics Program will begin in grade four. The Robotics curriculum in grades 6 through 8 will be enhanced and augmented. As Venerini Academy begins to embrace a STEAM/ROBOTICS Program across all grades, kindergarten through grade three will begin to introduce the Code And Go Robot Mouse and the Ozobot Coding Robot. Through Grant supported funding and in partnership with WPI, members of the faculty are being trained to integrate elements of the STEAM/ROBOTICS Program across the curriculum.

Observations

Guided by the school's mission, the teachers use and encourage an understanding that education is the means to liberate: to give the children the knowledge that education allows them the freedom to go forth in life making informed choices. The Catholic identity is clearly reflected in the work of the faculty, staff, and administration at the school. To stay true to the school's mission, limited financial aid funds are available for qualifying families.

74% of the parent survey participants feel the school has sufficient resources to support the program. The classrooms are well equipped with desks, texts, and instructional material to support the program. There are assistants at each grade to support teachers and students up through grade five. An outdoor playground structure suited for younger students was built in 2014. The playground structure is surrounded by a cushioning

agent and enclosed. Through the generosity of a donor, updates to the gymnasium were completed recently which allows for extra-curricular activities, play area, and physical education classes.

However, the lack of technology and devices to support the 21st century learner is evident. The school is making strides to address this issue. Each classroom has a projection system, there are two iPad carts with approximately thirty iPads that were donated seven years ago. The goal is to secure a grant for Chromebooks for the Middle School students. One of the school's goal is to become a Google School. Teacher training for this has begun, but devices are necessary to move forward. Various fundraisers have been initiated for this purpose.

A Library Plan is evolving as the position has been newly filled. In Kindergarten through Grade 5, students have a set time for it. Middle school teachers utilize the library as needed.

The school has an Acceptable Use Policy in place for students and families for technology usage located on the website. Parent signature allow for use of the technology in the school.

Teachers have adequate access to the computer lab, though some are untrained in the teaching of technology. However, limited technological devices impact the teachers' ability to use them in the classrooms. The computer lab is used by some teachers for Envisions Math, coding program, and STREAM classes. Fourth grade students have a weekly computer education class.

There are a wide variety of extracurricular activities for the students which enhance their experience. Many are developed internally and run by parent coaches while others are offered through outside vendors. The Athletic Director is instrumental in overseeing many of these activities.

The schedule has been established and is followed. Within grade levels, teachers can choose to be self-contained or to share subjects.

Student Outreach happens at Venerini Academy. Basketball team works the St. John's Food Pantry where the students do the actual serving breakfast. Families and students participate in a school-wide cleanup in early November. Over Christmas vacation, there is basketball tournament with many area schools. The connection with Worcester Polytechnic Institute through the professional development for Venerini Academy's STREAM program. In the past, the school has used interns from Assumption College for marketing.

Conclusions and Explanation of Rating

Venerini Academy's mission is sufficiently supported by resources. While the facility and space is outstanding, the lack of technology resources, instruction, and plan impedes progress.

Commendations

Faculty makes effective use of school resources, making the most of tools and materials that are available. The facility is well-maintained, clean, and inviting. There are a variety of non-academic programs that contribute to educating the whole child.

Recommendation 1

Venerini Academy must continue to explore sustainable funding for financial aid.

Recommendation 2

Venerini Academy should consider establishing an academic technology plan in conjunction with professional

development for teachers.

Recommendation 3

Venerini Academy should investigate funding sources to support technology initiatives.

Standard 7: Early Childhood Program

Standard

The Early Childhood Program enriches the social and intellectual development of its students by providing comprehensive programs and appropriate staffing, resources and facilities.

Visiting Team's Assessment

Standard Met (SM1, SM2): The students' experience is supported.

Standard Unmet (SU1, SU2): The students' experience is compromised.

SM1. Standard Met: Evidences clear understanding, effective implementation and thorough planning for further improvement.

Narrative Summary

Brief narrative summary of the school's position with regard to this standard. Text copied from the school's *Self-Study Report* is in italics.

Venerini Academy provides a full day Early Childhood Education Program for children between the ages of 3 and 5 years old. In order to be eligible for pre-school, the student must be 3 years old by August 31st and must be potty-trained. Orientation day for pre-school families is held on the day before the first day of school. The classroom ratio for pre-K3 is 13:2, pre-K4 is 17:2, and Kdg is 12:1.5. The Early Childhood staff is trained in Early Childhood/Child Development.

The Early Childhood Program at Venerini Academy has a solid academic core, with sufficient time to develop curiosity and imagination. Socialization skills, following directions, days, months, seasons, important people in history, fine motor skills, science projects, major holidays, and end of year presentations are the main focus of the classroom experience. Our kindergarten program's emphasis is on letter-sound formation, penmanship, beginning reading skills and an introduction to addition and subtraction. In both programs the students are provided with specials in art, music, gym, library and computer skills. Each student is regularly assessed, progress charted, and reviewed with parents at fall and spring conferences.

The Early Childhood Program has been designed to align with the Venerini Academy Mission Statement.

Observations

Venerini Academy has a vibrant Early Childhood Program. The materials, procedures, and posted routines with pictures and words establish students' routine and ensure the health and safety of all. The school's small class sizes and multiple classroom aides allow for assisting students with learning activities. Venerini Academy's staff is trained in the area of early childhood education and child development. The student-to-adult ratio is sufficient in relation to the number and ages of children in each early childhood group to ensure effective and safe tasks.

Venerini Academy's Early Childhood Program's educators communicate with parents of children through monthly newsletters, emails correspondence, daily conversations, private Facebook groups for parents, and applications

such as Remind 101. Parent volunteers regularly collaborate with the teachers for various activities within the classroom.

The daily schedule includes age-appropriate activities, including indoor and outdoor play. The fenced-in outdoor play area consists of a large structure with rubberized mulch for safety. The facilities and supporting resources are adequate in design and space provided for each child. These resources receive regular maintenance. Health and safety regulations for children in the Early Childhood Program are met; however, teachers are not maintaining appropriate cleaning supply storage.

The Venerini Academy mission statement was clearly posted in the Pre-K rooms. Venerini Academy offers spiritual growth in its Early Childhood Program through prayers: morning, meal time, and end of the day. Special intentions are offered on a daily basis. Students are taught the Mission of the school at an age-appropriate level. Kindness is encouraged through the 365Z program daily with monthly projects and activities to support the program.

Socially, students in the Early Childhood Program interact with peers during lunch, recess, and extra-curricular activities. Stations and centers in the classroom are set up for learning through interactive play with materials and procedures organized to ensure the health and safety of young children. Centers are set up for academic activities, including literacy and math.

Conclusions and Explanation of Rating

The Early Childhood Program at Venerini Academy enriches the social and intellectual development of young students through its comprehensive program and dedicated staff.

Commendations

Venerini Academy is to be commended for how its Early Childhood Program's faculty and staff provide a variety of learning activities for the students, including hands-on activities and centers for learning through interactive play.

Recommendation 1

Venerini Academy should examine how it is storing and using cleaning supplies within the Pre-K classrooms, ensuring that products are inaccessible to children at all times.

Standard 9: Faculty

Standard

There is a sufficient number of appropriately qualified faculty to carry out the mission of the school and the school follows a comprehensive and defined program of professional development that supports continued enhancement of teachers' skills.

Visiting Team's Assessment

Standard Met (SM1, SM2): The students' experience is supported.

Standard Unmet (SU1, SU2): The students' experience is compromised.

SM1. Standard Met: Evidences clear understanding, effective implementation and thorough planning for further improvement.

Narrative Summary

Brief narrative summary of the school's position with regard to this standard. Text copied from the school's *Self-Study Report* is in italics.

Venerini Academy's highly qualified and dedicated faculty members, work diligently to carry out its mission, to develop the whole child through rigorous academics. Our staff and leadership work together to create an environment that promotes respect, professionalism and inclusiveness for all within a faith-filled community. More than 90% of the parents surveyed believe that "throughout my child's experience at the school he/she has found thoughtful and skilled faculty members.

Observations

Venerini Academy utilizes School Spring, LinkedIn, and the Diocese of Worcester website to recruit professional staff who are best suited for the position. The Principal and Assistant Principal perform phone and in-person interviews to determine hiring choices. Through this process, candidates are made aware of the school's mission and history. Newly hired teachers are formally evaluated twice in the first year, along with regular visits from the Principal. Currently, there is not a structured mentoring program for new hires. Veteran teachers are formally evaluated annually, with regular walk-throughs and feedback. 85% of current teachers possess a Master's degree in their specific content area. Professional development is a priority, with a strong partnership between Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI) and Venerini Academy. Teachers and staff at Venerini Academy regularly participate in professional development hosted by the Diocese of Worcester, which provide adequate training and preparation to guide and grow students in knowledge and practice of the Catholic faith. Additionally, diocesan professional development provides faith development and theology to improve their own vocation as Catholic school educators.

One testament to Venerini Academy's success is the longevity of its educators at the school, with many teachers having been involved with the school for over five years, serving as role models and witnesses of the Gospel. The teachers at Venerini Academy have an open door policy where observations are welcome. With this, teachers are open to feedback and seek out ways to grow as a teacher. Teachers willingly participate in

professional development throughout the years. These values contribute to the shared understanding of teaching excellence.

Personnel practices at Venerini Academy ensure the ethical treatment of all members of the staff. The faculty handbook delineates the various details associated with compensation, professional behavior, workload, leave, and benefits. 95% of faculty members agree or strongly agree that faculty are treated with respect. The workloads for faculty, administration, and staff are large, but are equitably distributed. All the staff feel driven to complete the mission and feel like they are supported in their attempts to live out the mission of Venerini Academy.

Conclusions and Explanation of Rating

The devoted faculty and staff of Venerini Academy carry out the mission of the school through their ongoing commitment to professional development and spiritual growth. There is a caring connection between the staff and students which creates a culture of mutual respect.

Commendations

Venerini Academy has a strong and well-educated faculty and staff whose dedication and faithfulness are evident. Spiritual and professional development are priorities of which faculty may take full advantage. The faculty and staff are truly models and witnesses of the Gospel by word and example.

Recommendation 1

Venerini Academy should implement a structured mentoring program for newly hired faculty and staff to provide them with necessary support.

Standard 10: Administration

Standard

The administration provides leadership and maintains a structure to facilitate the effective functioning of the school, including the participation of faculty in decision-making.

Visiting Team's Assessment

Standard Met (SM1, SM2): The students' experience is supported.

Standard Unmet (SU1, SU2): The students' experience is compromised.

SM2. Standard Met: Evidences understanding, evolving implementation and planning for improvement.

Narrative Summary

Brief narrative summary of the school's position with regard to this standard. Text copied from the school's *Self-Study Report* is in italics.

Venerini Academy is an independent Catholic PreK - Grade 8 school, under the umbrella of the Worcester Diocese. Since Venerini Academy is not a Diocesan school, we are not subject to the Diocesan School calendar. As an independent school, we are not required to follow the 180 calendared academic year, but log over 950 hours of instruction. (The required minimum is 900) We join the other Diocesan schools for professional development, modest financial aid and Safety Programs.

The Board of Trustees is the governing body of the school. The Board consists of a Chair and six committees: financial, curriculum, facilities, technology, advancement and marketing. The role of the Board is to set policy, to assure the financial stability of the school, and to initiate changes or improvements.

The Principal oversees the daily organization and routine of the school. The Principal and Assistant Principal are responsible for assuring the good order and safety of the students and regular communication between faculty, staff, students and families.

Observations

The educational administration is effective in carrying out the program of the school. The Principal and Assistant Principal are very visible throughout the school and respected by the entire school community. The administration is passionate about the mission and the charism of St. Rosa They express their passion with all staff, parents, students, and prospective families. Administrative support staff is qualified to serve in their areas and willing to accept other responsibilities. A Curriculum Specialist is available to collaborate with teachers in reviewing, evaluating, and adjusting the curriculum as needed. A current plan to review and evaluate the curriculum needs to be established. Faculty input was used in adopting new math and writing programs. Monthly faculty meetings allow the faculty input into decision-making as appropriate.

Recently, the school hired a part-time Business Manager to fill the former full-time position. The part-time Business Manager is confident that she will be able to fulfill the many responsibilities of her position. As a new

hire, she has yet to be evaluated. While qualified to be in this position, there are no defined policies for the Business Manager to follow, nor was there an opportunity for mentoring. Currently, there is no board treasurer to oversee the Business Manager.

The Principal and Assistant Principal have embraced opportunities for professional development, through the diocese for educational topics, the College of the Holy Cross for administrative topics, and for program training. The Assistant Principal has had only informal evaluations in his administrative and admission roles in his tenure. The Principal has not been evaluated in her tenure.

Conclusions and Explanation of Rating

While the educational administration is phenomenal, the evaluative process is lacking.

Commendations

The well-respected educational administration are truly the spiritual and educational leaders of the Venerini Academy community.

Recommendation 1

Venerini Academy must institute and implement a formal evaluation process for the entire administrative staff, which includes the educational administration and the Business Manager.

Recommendation 2

A procedural policy manual outlining clear expectations for the function of the Business Manager must be created and implemented.

Recommendation 3

The Board of Trustees should consider forming a Finance Committee and should also consider conducting an independent financial audit.

Standard 11: Evaluation and Assessment

Standard

The school engages in forms of programmatic assessment consistent with fulfilling its mission and core values. This data is used to inform decision-making and planning.

Visiting Team's Assessment

Standard Met (SM1, SM2): The students' experience is supported.

Standard Unmet (SU1, SU2): The students' experience is compromised.

SM2. Standard Met: Evidences understanding, evolving implementation and planning for improvement.

Narrative Summary

Brief narrative summary of the school's position with regard to this standard. Text copied from the school's *Self-Study Report* is in italics.

Venerini Academy teachers use a variety of diverse methods of assessment that follow the Mission and core values of the school. Since we are called to discover the unique giftedness that is in each of our students, our teachers employ a variety of good teaching practices and assessments to assure that our students are challenged to reach their full potential.

Diagnostic Assessments are administered by the Admissions Office before the student's acceptance to assure that we can meet the needs of our students.

In class, teachers assess formally and informally throughout the day using oral recitation, discussions, debates, review of homework and a written presentation, long term projects, formative, summative and authentic assessments. Teachers get to know the strengths and limitations of each student. Students are challenged to go beyond their perceived potential and those who find the challenges overwhelming are offered extra help and review sessions to help build their confidence.

Yearly standardized testing is given to students in Grades 3 – 8. This allows Venerini Academy to evaluate students' progress to see their strengths and areas for improvement. The results of the Standardized Tests help shape the programs and curriculum for the following year. Terra Nova testing promoted by the Diocese for decades will be replaced by the NEWA MAP Standardized Tests in the 2018/2019 school year. Eighth-grade students will now sit for the Pre PSAT during their final year at Venerini.

Teachers are evaluated formally and informally by the Principal. The follow up conversations help guide teachers professionally.

At faculty meetings at the end of the academic year, teachers and administrators discuss the progress the school has made in achieving the goals. Goals for the upcoming year are shared at the beginning of the academic year and are monitored through the year.

At the core of the goals that are presented at the beginning of the academic year, are the guidance principals of St. Rosa Venerini. As a Maestro Pie (Holy Teacher) in the 17th century, St. Rosa recognized that God has planted in the souls of each of our children, seeds that must be nurtured each day. Our goal as St. Rosa's disciples is to assure growth in the image and likeness of a loving God.

Observations

Presently Venerini Academy is changing its standardized testing program from Terra Nova to NWEA for Kindergarten through Grade 7 while the eighth grade students take the Pre-PSAT 8. Since NWEA is new this year, teachers will need professional development to be able to utilize the data. Professional development has been set for early November 2018. Teachers at both the lower and upper levels will participate in the workshops and share the information at a faculty meeting. Terra Nova testing has provided one snapshot of longitudinal assessment of the students; report cards and cumulative cards do as well. Portfolios are not maintained in Preschool through Grade 2, though the Self Study indicated that they are. The Empowering Writing program suggests the use of portfolios as a part of its approach. However, the portfolios are not maintained in the upper levels.

Exit interviews are conducted via personal interviews, surveys, or phone calls when students depart before graduation. Alumni share experiences at their high schools when they return for a visit.

The Board has recognized the need for a Marketing Consultant. At time of the Self Study, a former parent filled this need on a pro bono basis. The school is now providing compensation to the consultant. Since the curriculum needs updating, the Curriculum Specialist invites consultants to present to the faculty their programs. Faculty have a voice in the choice of new materials. Worcester Polytechnic Institute has worked with the school to create a STREAM program. At various times, Assumption College has had interns working in the marketing.

The mission of the school goes beyond its walls. Students participate in the National Geography Bee and Science Fairs which make them eligible for diocesan, state, and national fairs. Venerini Academy has been the recipient of four awards from the Library Services and Technology Act. Student outreach manifests the vitality of the school's mission. Both the National Junior Honor Society and the National Junior Art Honor Society are current offerings to students.

Evaluation of teachers is ongoing. For veteran teachers, there is usually a formal observation once a year while new teachers have two formal evaluations. Walk-through evaluations happen frequently for all teachers. The Board of Trustees is charged with the evaluation of the Principal. Yearly surveys (faculty, parents, students) are used to evaluate the leadership.

The school's diversity is embraced through the Catholic faith. Published on its website through the Parent/Student Handbook and its admissions packet, it states, "We all have a primary role in teaching students to be civil to one another and promoting understanding of and respect for diversity and difference." A policy and plan on diversity does not currently exist.

The school has undertaken the Self Study and invited the NEASC Visiting Team as an opportunity to evaluate the school's program.

Conclusions and Explanation of Rating

Venerini Academy's forms of evaluation and assessment are consistent with fulfilling its core mission and values. This will be a work in progress as Venerini Academy fully develops its NWEA data and utilizes available resources.

Commendations

Venerini Academy is to be commended for embracing NWEA and for securing a Marketing Consultant as well as inviting the NEASC Visiting Committee to visit the school.

Recommendation 1

Venerini Academy should utilize all of the components of the Empowering Writing program for longitudinal assessment of student performance.

Recommendation 2

While the school has a diversity statement, Venerini Academy should construct a diversity policy and plan.

Standard 12: Health and Safety

Standard

The school is a safe place that supports the physical, emotional and cognitive health and development of all students, faculty and staff.

Visiting Team's Assessment

Standard Met (SM1, SM2): The students' experience is supported.

Standard Unmet (SU1, SU2): The students' experience is compromised.

SM2. Standard Met: Evidences understanding, evolving implementation and planning for improvement.

Narrative Summary

Brief narrative summary of the school's position with regard to this standard. Text copied from the school's *Self-Study Report* is in italics.

Venerini Academy commits to providing a safe learning environment for the entire school community. A comprehensive Crisis Response Plan and School Safety and Security Plan was revised in 2011 and is currently in the process of another revision. All faculty and staff have immediate access to this plan and required to review it at least annually. Additionally, students and faculty participate in crisis response drills on a regular basis with support of the Worcester Fire Department. Drills include both fire and shelter in place. Parents are notified that the school has a comprehensive Crisis Response Plan and School Safety and Security Plan. If the school activates any of their emergency response plans, parents are notified via a call system from the Principal. Both the Principal and Assistant Principal will be trained in the A.L.I.C.E program before the end of the academic year. Faculty, staff, coaches and volunteers will be trained in the fall of 2018. Working with the Worcester Police Department the A.L.I.C.E protocol will be introduced and shared in the 2018-2019 school year.

Observations

Venerini Academy is a safe place that supports the physical, emotional, and cognitive health and development of all students, faculty, and staff. 86% of parent survey participants feel that the school is safe, clean, well-organized. It is evident that students feel very much a valued part of the school community. Last year, a conflict arose involving grades and sports eligibility. The students initiated a meeting with teachers that resulted in a mutually agreed-upon outcome.

Students are well-supported at Venerini Academy. The school employs a full-time nurse, who serves as an unofficial counselor. She holds a bachelors degree in psychology and is a certified Registered nurse. She is comfortable with the dual role, but advocates for a certified counselor to better meet the needs of the students. Over the course of two days, every other year, students learn about mental health, strategies, suicide awareness through the Shine Initiative. The nurse also offers outside referral information as needed to parents. There is a process in place for the nurse document and follow-up on student health concerns. Staff safety incidents require diocesan documentation.

Venerini Academy has a Crisis Response Plan. The plan is inconsistently accessible. Fire drill exit routes are posted in some classrooms, not in all. Fire drills are conducted four times a year; to date, one has occurred. The plan will require significant revision once faculty and staff are formally trained in ALICE training later this fall. This presents evidence that the systems are audited and validated.

The school maintains the legal requirements in the areas of mandatory reporting, appropriate emotional and physical boundaries, complemented by healthy relationships, provided by the diocese. Consistent with social and emotional training, most faculty and staff are trained in the use of epi-pens, AEDs, and in CPR. The school is handicap accessible. A ground-level wheelchair lift and the school elevator provide access to the entire school except the gymnasium, and a ramp provides access to it.

The school has a dedicated nurse's office and a cafeteria. Both are well-maintained and provide adequate space for student use. Food is not prepared on site and vending machines are available for beverages. Venerini Academy updated its Wellness Policy three years ago. It includes nutritional value, explanations of screenings offered, how the nurse's office is utilized, decisions such as recess cannot be used as a punishment.

The school is consistent and diligent in providing appropriate adult-student supervision during all school-sponsored activities and events. Hiring procedures are consistent with diocesan policies, and include background and reference checks. When providing written references, care is given to honesty and candor.

Conclusions and Explanation of Rating

While Venerini Academy is an extremely safe place that supports its students health and well-being, the Crisis Response Plan must be absolutely available and accessible to all adults supervising students. The plan was inconsistently available in student spaces.

Commendations

Venerini Academy provides adult-student supervision during all school-sponsored events and activities in an exemplary manner. Additionally, the school is to be commended for its plan to implement ALICE training for its faculty and staff.

Recommendation 1

The school's Crisis Response Plan, though currently under revision, must be readily accessible and available to faculty and staff, particularly those charged with supervision of students.

Standard 13: Communication

Standard

The school maintains effective systems of external and internal communication and record keeping that inform all constituents and facilitate participation where appropriate.

Visiting Team's Assessment

Standard Met (SM1, SM2): The students' experience is supported.

Standard Unmet (SU1, SU2): The students' experience is compromised.

SM1. Standard Met: Evidences clear understanding, effective implementation and thorough planning for further improvement.

Narrative Summary

Brief narrative summary of the school's position with regard to this standard. Text copied from the school's *Self-Study Report* is in italics.

Venerini Academy is a Catholic-Christian community that embraces families from diverse socio-economic backgrounds. Teachers, assistants and Administrators are sensitive to the academic, social, economic and behavioral needs of all our students and their families. The Venerini community seeks to work with families proactively, helping families and our students enjoy a nurturing environment. Referrals will be made if the school nurse (counselor) and the administration feel that families could benefit from more specialized guidance.

Observations

The records of current students are maintained in the main office in a locked and fire proof cabinet. These files are available only to authorized persons. Former student records are also in a locked and fire proof cabinet that is located in the principal's office. Faculty files are stored in a locked and fire proof cabinet in the principal's office and are only accessible to the administration.

Venerini Academy publishes current school policies and procedures in handbooks and makes them readily available to constituencies. The faculty handbook is revised and distributed each year. Each faculty member must sign the document to signify that he or she has read the policies and agrees to abide by them. The parent/student handbook is made available to families upon enrollment and is available on the Teacher Ease site.

There are occasionally discrepancies between the handbook and what occurs on a daily basis, however these instances do not harm the integrity of the school. For example, the parent handbook states that there are two possible drop off locations, yet some parents continue to use a third entrance that is explicitly prohibited by the handbook. Similarly, if students are dropped off before 8:15 am, the parents are expected to pay for morning care. However, if parents drop off students at 8:00 or 8:05 then they typically are not charged.

Venerini Academy holds monthly staff meetings in the morning before school. These meetings allow for all staff

to give input or address specific issues.

Venerini clearly states in writing the financial responsibilities of parents and this is made available to parents prior to enrollment. This information is made available first on the website, but is then provided in much clearer terms to parents initiate the application process. Venerini directs parents to the diocesan FACTS Tuition Management Program and provides assistance to parents whenever possible.

Parents can contact teachers through Teacher Ease, email, or calling the main office. Parents are also welcome to meet with teachers before school to discuss concerns and interests. The Principal has an open door policy and regularly meets with parents to discuss concerns and interests. Similarly, the Visiting Team observed many parents walking their students to the classroom. These interactions were brief, but showed that there is consistent contact between school personnel and parents.

Venerini Academy uses TeacherEase to communicate student progress regularly with students. This program has been used for two years. Parents are notified through email whenever a teacher inputs a grade or a note. Teachers can also use this to communicate with parents via an email function.

At the end of the first trimester, there are parent-teacher conferences. Parents can sign up for a 10 minute time slot to talk with teachers about student progress. Venerini also encourages parents to schedule meetings with teachers as necessary.

Venerini uses Constant Contact to communicate to all constituents weekly events and other news. Faculty also receive meeting agendas and notes about upcoming events in their mailboxes, which faculty are expected to check regularly.

Standard 14: Infrastructure

Standard

There are adequate resources (personnel, finances, facilities, equipment, and materials) to provide for the overall institutional needs of the school.

Visiting Team's Assessment

Standard Met (SM1, SM2): The students' experience is supported.

Standard Unmet (SU1, SU2): The students' experience is compromised.

SU1. Standard Unmet: Evidences inadequate understanding, implementation and planning for remediation that may foreseeably compromise student experience.

Narrative Summary

Brief narrative summary of the school's position with regard to this standard. Text copied from the school's *Self-Study Report* is in italics.

Venerini Academy was established in 1945 in a three-decker across from its current location. In 1954, the Religious Sisters of Venerini transitioned to the "new" campus at 27 Edward Street, Worcester, MA. The Academy strives to ensure that there are adequate resources to provide a safe and clean learning environment for our students, faculty and administration. The school is maintained by one full time and one part time custodian.

Observations

The campus of Venerini Academy is clean and inviting. The facilities are maintained by one full-time custodian and a teacher helper, who assists daily with miscellaneous tasks. While the Self Study indicates recent facilities and maintenance plans exist, they do not. Both plans would assist the school as it prepares for future needs, improvements, and additions.

Venerini Academy recently hired a part-time business manager to replace a full-time business manager who historically oversaw facilities in addition to her role as business manager. The new part-time business manager focuses solely on finances. A financial audit has not been completed in recent years - only a review. The school is currently using Peach Tree as their financial management system. After this year, the business manager intends to switch over to the desktop version of Quickbooks. The business manager will be the sole user of Quickbooks.

In 2008, the school experienced a significant financial setback and has spent the past ten years recovering. Currently, the school has regained stability, carrying a meager balance on their line of credit with a local bank. It was reported by both the Interim Board Chair and the Business Manager that the line of credit could be paid off now; however, to keep a healthy cash flow, they have decided to keep its current draw.

Venerini Academy is aware of the need for a current multi-year plan; an updated plan does not exist. The Board of Trustees has engaged with an educational consultant who is providing guidance and vision for said plan. The

intention is to wait until the school re-accreditation report is provided to the school and a new leadership team is hired before moving to the next phase of planning.

A current technology plan that includes the coordination of academic and administrative functions, available services, needs, direction, and systems is being worked on this year, but does not currently exist. The Technology Coordinator is forming a committee to accomplish this task.

Conclusions and Explanation of Rating

Over the past ten years, Venerini Academy has done a remarkable job recovering from a devastating financial setback. As such, the school was forced to prioritize its efforts to overcome this challenge. This was appropriate and necessary. However, focusing on this issue did not allow Venerini Academy to adequately plan for its long- and short-term needs, improvements, and goals.

Unexpected changes in the business office did not create a smooth transition to include proper training and does not currently allow for appropriate oversight. Given the financial woes that impacted Venerini Academy, it is vital that the school conduct a financial audit versus a financial review as soon as possible.

Part of ensuring a strong and healthy future includes procedural and deliberate planning. Currently, a maintenance/facilities plan does not exist. Nor does a technology plan that will coordinate functions, systems, and resources. The school must also create and implement a business office manual to provide the Business Manager with trustee directives and expectations. This will allow oversight and long-term stability.

Venerini Academy is a school that must exist. Its mission to educate and liberate is essential for Worcester, the community, and our Church. In order for Venerini Academy to continue its vital mission, it will need the same resilience, resolve, and grace it has demonstrated since its inception.

Commendations

Venerini Academy is to be commended for its maintenance of the building and grounds; it is clean, inviting, and accessible. It serves its students, teachers, and staff and is organized in such a way that is logical and compartmentalized.

Recommendation 1

Venerini Academy must complete a current, multi-year plan that includes a clear picture of its long- and short-term needs, improvements, and goals.

Recommendation 2

Given the financial challenges faced by Venerini Academy, it is in its best interest of the school to put better financial controls in place. These controls must include the following: a comprehensive financial audit, business office oversight by the finance committee of the Board of Trustees, and an accounting manual that outlines the roles, procedures, and responsibilities of the Business Manager.

Recommendation 3

Venerini Academy must continue its efforts of establishing a technology committee which will be charged with creating an institutional technology plan.

Recommendation 4

Venerini Academy should create a maintenance and facilities plan that includes manuals on how to manage the different facilities systems of the school.

Standard 15: The Accreditation Process

Standard

The school is fully committed to institutional improvement and to the process of accreditation. The school completed an inclusive Self-Study, conducted in a spirit of full disclosure and following Association guidelines; responds to Commission recommendations and the requirement to meet all Standards; and participates fully in the peer review process, hosting a Visiting Committee and sending personnel to serve on Visiting Committees to other institutions.

Visiting Team's Assessment

Standard Met (SM1, SM2): The students' experience is supported.

Standard Unmet (SU1, SU2): The students' experience is compromised.

SM1. Standard Met: Evidences clear understanding, effective implementation and thorough planning for further improvement.

Narrative Summary

Brief narrative summary of the school's position with regard to this standard. Text copied from the school's *Self-Study Report* is in italics.

Venerini Academy has been working on the NEASC Self-Study for the past two years with the enthusiastic support of the faculty, the staff, the Board of Trustees and the Religious Venerini Sisters. All constituencies engaged in the process seriously, developing thoughtful and reflective responses to the questions posed in the guidelines. The Administration enthusiastically supported the Self-Study and provided the faculty with the time necessary to use this process to help move the school forward in the years to come. The NEASC report was reviewed by the faculty, the staff, the Board of Trustees and Sister Teresa Rose Carchidi, Provincial of the Venerini Sisters. The strengths and areas of improvement have been noted and acknowledged. They will form the basis of an action plan as Venerini Academy moves forward. The NEASC Self-Study was co-chaired by Lisa Nelson, a veteran Grade 3 who has participated in two visiting committees and by Paul Jourcin, Admission Staff, Assistant Principal, and former French teacher. The co-chairs have met throughout the process and twice over the summer of 2018 to review and edit the report as well as to prepare for the Visiting Committee needs in October 2018.

Observations

Venerini Academy has completed a thorough Self Study in accordance with NEASC policies. The teachers, administration, and staff were active participants in the process and are familiar with the findings of the Self Study. Additionally, the Provincial of the Venerini Sisters and the Board of Trustees were familiar with the findings in the Self Study and participated in the process, where appropriate. The school intends to utilize the recommendations, note the progress they have made since their last re-accreditation, and recognize that there is still work ahead. Several faculty members of Venerini Academy have participated in Visiting Committees to other schools. The school has completed a formidable undertaking by overcoming obstacles that may have leveled other schools. Despite past challenges, Venerini Academy is able to move forward in a remarkable way that has

never lost sight of the Venerini vision. The school is aware of the tasks ahead and the school community is not daunted what's ahead of them. Venerini Academy intends to use the recommendations in this report to establish the multi-year plan.

Conclusions and Explanation of Rating

Venerini Academy is fully committed to institutional improvement and to the process of accreditation.

Commendations

The Visiting Committee commends Venerini Academy for working diligently to prepare a reflective Self Study. All members of the school community were active participants in the process and were thoughtful in their responses. The Visiting Committee was shown tremendous hospitality by Venerini Academy; every request by the Visiting Committee was met with a smile and a helpful response.

Self-Study Part II: Reflection, Recommendations, and Issues for Further Discussion

Self-Study Part II

Part II asks the school to draw together what it has learned from its Self-Study and prioritize these ideas into a thoughtful, reflective, creative summary of the school's most significant concerns, hopes, and dreams for the future. This may include both action items and discussion items.

Descriptive paragraphs which accurately describe the school's findings may be taken directly from the *Self-Study Report* and are in italics.

Part IIA: Catholic Identity - Overview

For more than 70 years, Venerini Academy has been a "beacon of light" and a bastion of Faith to the urban community in the heart of Worcester. Founded as an all girls' Catholic elementary and high school in 1945 to educate the minds and nurture the faith of young Italian girls and immigrant children from central Europe; Venerini Academy has continued to better understand the heart of St. Rosa's charism: "To Educate is to Liberate".

In the Early 1970's as the Diocese of Worcester began to consolidate individual parish schools the Venerini Sisters began to reflect on how they could better serve its young families. By allowing the Diocesan and Private Catholic single-sex and co-ed high schools to take on the challenge of educating the minds, hearts and souls teenagers, the Venerini Sisters opened wide the doors to offer a faith-based, values and centered education to young girls and boys from Kindergarten through the eighth grade. A pre-K educational component was added as young married women began to develop their academic talents and professional dreams outside of the house.

Continuing to discern the richness of St. Rosa's Charism and to meet the spiritual, academic, social, emotional and athletic needs of families of all faiths St. Rosa's dictum "To Educate is to Liberate" has always been at the heart of a Venerini education. With the decline in vocations after Vatican II, that responsibility is now carried on by dedicated, talented and faith-filled team of women and men "missionaries" who understand and that the pillars of a Venerini education: Faith, Knowledge, Humility, Respect and Service are the "tools" that will help our students better understand Rosa's vision and teach them to bring the Good News to life, not only during their Venerini years but through their high school and college journey, as young adults and parents of future Venerini students!

Our Catholic Identity is summed up in one simple and powerful statement: God is at the center of everything we do" and "Educating to Save and to Set Free" has been the business of Venerini Academy for 73 years.

Beginning daily with school-wide prayer led by the principal, followed by a kindness quote shared by one of our students, formal and spontaneous prayer is offered in the homeroom classroom along with the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance and the Mission Statement. It is clear that our Catholic Identity is affirmed at the beginning of each day.

With the study of the sacraments, the reflection on passage from the Old and New Testament, a curriculum that takes our students through the ministry of Jesus and His Apostles and lessons on the basic tenants of the Catholic faith, our students' faith is nurtured daily.

Class sponsored liturgies and prayer services allow our students to actively proclaim their faith to the entire Venerini community along with parents and grandparents.

Students are taught the wisdom of "God First, others second and me last" through a series of service opportunities; food and clothing drives, acts of kindness, serving the homeless at the Saint John's food pantry

and through a Middle School Team building retreat.

Holy Days of obligation and the solemnity of Holy Week are celebrated as a faith community, St. Rosa's Feast Day in early May gives us pause to reflect on the amazing legacy of our foundress to open wide our doors for parents, grandparents and friends of Venerini to see our children at work and at play.

St. Rosa reminded her young community of women teachers (the Maestrae Pie) the "Good that you do, Do Well". For more than 70 years, the Venerini Sisters with the Support of a devoted group of lay women and men have taken this charge seriously. God has blessed us with the inspiration of St. Rosa as we will continue to be the "Beacon of Light" in the Worcester Community.

Part IIB: Overall Reflection, Recommendations, and Issues for Further Discussion - Overview

Venerini Academy enthusiastically participated in the NEASC for re-accreditation. Throughout the process, faculty, staff, administrators, Board of Trustee members and students expressed thoughts and shared ideas that have sculpted the responses to the 15 NEASC Standards. Time and again as the Venerini community grappled with the questions before them, long term faculty members shared: "Wow!" We have come so far since the 2008 Self-Study." Knowing where we come from is always a good place to start when a community of Faith and a community of educators takes a close look at who, what and where we are in preparing to write the next chapter in the history of this beloved school.

Venerini Academy is sponsored by the Religious Venerini Sisters whose Charism rests firmly on St. Rosa's challenge "to Educate is to Liberate". Led by talented, dedicated and professional members of the Board of Trustees and Sister Teresa Rose, Provincial of the Venerini Sisters of North America, the Principal and her Administrators are responsible for living out the Charism, providing for the good order and academic rigor of the institution and for developing a Vision to move Venerini Academy forward. The Mission is supported by the pillars of Venerini education: Faith, Knowledge, Humility, Respect and Service.

In 2008, in an attempt to renovate the former convent and transform it into much needed learning space, the Venerini Sisters engaged an advancement advisor to raise funds for the transformation. This ruthless scam artist duped the Venerini Sisters and Board of Advisors. A very public scandal followed. Through the generosity of the Venerini Sisters they used their retirement fund to sustain the multi-million dollar scam. The leadership of the school was reorganized, and in the months that followed the school moved forward mired in serious financial debt.

Regaining the confidence of the families who questioned the future of the school has been an on-going challenge. The global financial "Recession" from 2008-2013 further challenged the institution. This was followed by the Sexual Abuse Scandal in the Church's hierarchy, the decline in demographics that will continue to plague elementary, high schools and college until 2030. With the dramatic increase in tuition at private high schools and universities, parents began to invest their education dollars at a higher level.

Through the difficult period Venerini Academy has moved forward cautiously, slowly, but with purpose.

Observations

Venerini Academy has a rich and proud history, guided by the Congregation of Venerini Sisters, which serves as a strong foundation upon which to build their future. Important in determining next best steps is to create a thoughtful and meaningful Self Study that highlights the strengths and recognizes the challenges. Venerini has done that.

The strength of Venerini Academy lies in living its mission, creating a safe, productive, faithful learning environment, and its dedicated staff and faculty. Dedicated involvement of all stakeholders contributes greatly towards the family culture and climate so evident at Venerini Academy. The school's facility and grounds are

clean, inviting, and accessible.

The challenges identified by Venerini Academy are evident, but we wish to draw attention to other encumbrances. The greatest challenge observed is the lack of a thoughtful, deliberate multi-year plan that includes a clear picture of its long- and short-term needs, improvements, and goals. This must include comprehensive financial, including oversight and audit, institutional technology, and maintenance and facilities plans.

Enrollment is a challenge faced by Venerini Academy. An advancement and marketing strategy, led by an Advancement Director, will greatly aid in facing the enrollment challenge.

The educational program at Venerini Academy serves its students well. However, a written timeline for curriculum review and updates, utilizing the Curriculum Specialist, will ensure the continued success of the program.

Exploring means of sustainable funding will better support the program, technology initiatives, and financial aid available for families.

The current administration of Venerini Academy leads the school with passion, commitment, and love. Moving forward, a formal evaluation process for the entire administrative staff including the educational administration and the Business Manager will provide continued great leadership.

Conclusions

Venerini Academy is a vibrant, important part of the Worcester, Massachusetts community and educates students to be healthy, strong, academically prepared citizens who will continue to serve the vision established by the Religious Venerini Sisters throughout their lives. The academic standards are high and the faculty and staff are dedicated to the success of the their students.

Commendations

Venerini Academy lives out its mission through the reflective and intentional writing of Part II, which can then be used to guide the school to remain standing as a "beacon of light."

Recommendation 1

While recognizing the tremendous efforts made by Venerini Academy in their Self Study, their highest priority remains developing a strategic multi-year plan in order to ensure continued success. Critical to this effort is creating specific financial, technology, and facility plans.

Major Commendations and Recommendations

Major Commendations

1. Venerini Academy provides its students, faculty, staff, and community members with a vision and mission that exemplifies the Charism of St. Rosa: "To educate is to liberate." The dedication of the Religious Venerini Sisters maintains this charism, and its vibrancy permeates the entire school community.
2. The Visiting Committee commends the Board of Trustees for undertaking a significant task with noteworthy commitment and love for the school. It is very apparent that the current board and administration are committed to the success of the school and are working collaboratively for the continuity of the mission. It is clear that the Catholic identity is central to those overseeing the school; this identity is woven throughout the many facets of the school's culture. The Board of Trustees, in conjunction with the administration, work hard to establish and monitor school policy while modeling integrity and inclusive behavior.
3. Venerini Academy's admissions process works to ensure that prospective students will benefit from their experience of the mission and program offered. Communication among appropriate staff, relative to prospective students' talents, strengths, skills, and needs, is exceptional.
4. Venerini Academy is to be commended for their implementation of STREAM throughout the school, as well as their work in updating the science curriculum to align with Massachusetts Next Generation Science Standards, facilitated by their highly-qualified Curriculum Specialist.
5. Venerini Academy is a caring community that nurtures the academic, emotional, spiritual, physical, and personal success of its students. The teachers and administration showcase their commitment by helping students of all ability levels reach their highest academic potential. Venerini Academy is a prayerful place that calls students to grow in their knowledge of faith.
6. Faculty makes effective use of school resources, making the most of tools and materials that are available. The facility is well-maintained, clean, and inviting. There are a variety of non-academic programs that contribute to educating the whole child.
7. Venerini Academy is to be commended for how its Early Childhood Program's faculty and staff provide a variety of learning activities for the students, including hands-on activities and centers for learning through interactive play.
8. Venerini Academy has a strong and well-educated faculty and staff whose dedication and faithfulness are evident. Spiritual and professional development are priorities of which faculty may take full advantage. The faculty and staff are truly models and witnesses of the Gospel by word and example.
9. The well-respected educational administration are truly the spiritual and educational leaders of the Venerini Academy community.
10. Venerini Academy is to be commended for embracing NWEA and for securing a Marketing Consultant as well as inviting the NEASC Visiting Committee to visit the school.
11. Venerini Academy provides adult-student supervision during all school-sponsored events and activities in an exemplary manner. Additionally, the school is to be commended for its plan to implement ALICE training for its faculty and staff.

12. Venerini Academy succeeds in communicating its policies and procedures to all constituents. Venerini Academy communicates with parents regularly and has several protocols in place to ensure that parents are aware of student progress; they also have the opportunity to discuss concerns and interests with personnel.
13. Venerini Academy is to be commended for its maintenance of the building and grounds; it is clean, inviting, and accessible. It serves its students, teachers, and staff and is organized in such a way that is logical and compartmentalized.
14. The Visiting Committee commends Venerini Academy for working diligently to prepare a reflective Self Study. All members of the school community were active participants in the process and were thoughtful in their responses. The Visiting Committee was shown tremendous hospitality by Venerini Academy; every request by the Visiting Committee was met with a smile and a helpful response.

Major Recommendation 1

Venerini Academy's Board of Trustees must develop a multi-year strategic plan, with representation from the different constituencies of the school. As part of this effort, a financial, technology, and a facility plan must be included. Through this, a timeline is needed to prioritize initiatives--principal search, strategic plan, the hiring of an Advancement Director, database management, finances, and an expanded board with designated roles.

Major Recommendation 2

Venerini Academy should explore initiatives to increase enrollment, acquire strategies for marketing the school, and establish a greater presence in the community. The school should then encourage the soon-to-be-hired Advancement Director to explore sustainable sources of funding the program, technology initiatives, and providing additional tuition assistance for families.

Major Recommendation 3

Venerini Academy should develop a written timeline for curriculum review and updates. The school should consider utilizing the many resources (text, people, program) available to streamline the continuity of the academic curriculum.

Major Recommendation 4

Venerini Academy must institute and implement a formal evaluation process for the entire administrative staff, which includes the educational administration and the Business Manager. The Board of Trustees, possibly through a Finance Committee, should develop and implement a procedural policy manual outlining clear expectations for the function of the Business Manager.

Major Recommendation 5

Venerini Academy's Crisis Response Plan must be made accessible and available to faculty and staff, particularly those charged with supervision of students.

Ratings Table

Ratings Table

For each applicable Standard, please:

1. Enter the school's self-rating and the Visiting Committee's rating in the first two columns.
2. Enter an X in the column for "Unmet Rating?" if the Visiting Committee's rating is an SU1 or SU2.
3. Enter an X in "Differing Rating" if the Visiting Committee's rating differs from the school's self-rating.
4. Enter an X in the last column to indicate that you have provided evidence for an unmet or differing rating within the text of the *Visiting Committee Report*.

Skip any Standards which do not apply.

	School's Self-Rating	VC Rating	Unmet Rating?	Differing Rating?	Evidence Provided for Unmet/Differing Rating?
Standard 1: Mission	SM1	SM1			
Standard 2: Governance	SM2	SM2			
Standard 3: Enrollment	SM2	SM1		X	X
Standard 4: Program	SM1	SM2		X	X
Standard 5: Experience of the Students	SM2	SM1		X	X
Standard 6: Resources to Support the Program	SM2	SM2			
Standard 7: Early Childhood Program	SM1	SM1			
Standard 8: Residential Program and/or Homestay Program					
Standard 9: Faculty	SM2	SM1		X	X
Standard 10: Administration	SM2	SM2			
Standard 11: Evaluation and Assessment	SM2	SM2			
Standard 12: Health and Safety	SM1	SM2		X	X
Standard 13: Communication	SM2	SM1		X	X
Standard 14: Infrastructure	SM2	SU1	X	X	X
Standard 15: The Accreditation Process	SM1	SM1			