

NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES, INC.

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COMMISSION ON TECHNICAL AND CAREER INSTITUTIONS

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LETTER TO FOCUSED VISITING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Dear Visiting Committee Member:

May I express the thanks of the Commission on Technical and Career Institutions for your willingness to accept the assignment as a member of a visiting committee. Perhaps a few comments will help clarify the role of the individual visiting committee member in the Commission's assessment of the school's program.

Prior to your arrival, the host school will have spent considerable time in preparing a focused visit report. As representatives of the Association, the visiting committee will spend 2½ days at the school reviewing the findings of the focused visit report, identifying programs which are commendable, and indicating areas which need improvement.

The focused visiting committee report and other supportive documents are reviewed by the Commission on Technical and Career Institutions as a basis for voting continued accreditation with the New England Association of Schools and Colleges. Clearly, the report of the visiting committee is vital in Commission deliberations.

As a visiting committee member, we trust you will be neither a relentless critic nor an innocuous observer. Neither posture will be of service to your hosts.

Because you will see much of the procedures and group dynamics of the school, it is important to keep all of your observations confidential. Be professional, constructive, and objective in your relationship with the school's staff.

Remember that we are not in the business of evaluating individual instructors or administrators; we are examining and setting forth in the clearest possible terms how well the institution implements its stated philosophy and its vocational programs.

Committee findings should be delivered to the staff by the chair during the oral report, not by individual committee members.

Review the material you received in this packet and that sent by the host director. This information will help you learn about the community and the school and its philosophy. You will find out how this school is unique.

Review the Commission's **Standards of Membership**, which are included in this packet.

Focused Visiting Committee Members

When you leave the school, please respect the confidentiality of your findings. You became privy to the workings of the school by virtue of your assignment as a visiting committee member. Do not divulge your observations or committee judgments following the visit.

Do not become concerned or anxious about commendations, recommendations or evaluations. School officials will get the opportunity to correct inaccuracies which appear in the visiting committee report.

We are sure that the task of a visiting committee member must seem enormous to you and it is. It is difficult for any professional to visit a school, become involved enough to capture its essence, yet remain apart enough to make objective, pertinent recommendations to improve its quality.

That is the ultimate goal of an evaluation--school improvement. Your recommendations may be consonant with the staff and administration's or they may not; but, if you sincerely believe that your recommendation, if implemented, will improve the school, you have done your job well.

We wish you the best in your assignment and thank you for the time and energy you will devote to the task.

Sincerely,

Paul Bento
Director of the Commission on Technical and Career Institutions

Enclosures