

National Lutheran School Accreditation
Evidence-Based Self-Study Report
for Lutheran Schools

Revised September 2023

PART 2

The Self-Study Document
St. James Lutheran School
Howard Lake, MN
February 2024

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Part 2: The Self-Study Document

General Information About the School	2
Standard 1: Purpose	20
Standard 2: Relationships	29
2A: School and Congregation	29
2B: School and Community	36
2C: School Climate	44
Standard 3: Leadership	54
3A: Governance	54
3B: Administration	68
Standard 4: Professional Personnel	80
Standard 5: Teaching and Learning	89
Standard 6: Student Services	103
Standard 7: Facilities	112
Identification of Powerful Practices	121
Preliminary School Action Plan	122
School Action Plan	123

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

1. School

Name: St. James
Address: PO Box 680 - 1000 6th Ave
City, State, Zip Code: Howard Lake, MN 55349
Phone: 320-543-2630
Email: school@stjameshl.org

2. Congregation(s) *(List all operating congregations. Use a separate sheet, if necessary.)*

Name, Complete Address: St. James
PO Box 680 - 1000 7th Ave
Howard Lake, MN 55349

3. School Administrator(s)

Name: Rev. Mark Loder
Email: revloder@gmail.com
Phone: 320-543-2630

4. Pastor(s)

Name: Rev. Mark Loder
Email: revloder@gmail.com
Phone: 320-543-2766

5. List All Agencies Currently Accrediting the School

NLSA

6. Attach a list of all Steering Committee and subcommittee members, indicating whether they are teachers, parents, etc.

Rev. Mark Loder - Administrator/Pastor/Teacher
Mrs. Nancy Butterfass - Administrative Assistant/Teacher
Mrs. Angi Chabot - Teacher
Mrs. Pamela Halverson - Teacher
Mrs. Lisa Kotila - Teacher
Mr. Luke Dahl - Teacher
Mrs. Amy Laage - Parent

7. Attach a copy of the school's most recent [LCMS Early Childhood Center and School Statistical Report.](#)

Community Information

Please attach a recent (within the last three years) copy of an [LCEF Demographic Study](#) (this is a free report provided by LCEF. Please contact your LCMS District's LCEF Vice President for the report).

1. Write a brief history of the school.

In 1918, the congregation of St. James passed a resolution to establish a Christian day school. In that same year the school building was built. As the school grew, the first principal was called in 1920. Enrollment the first year of the school's operation was 50 students. This current academic year, St. James has 109 enrolled students. Approximately 43% of the student body is from non-member families. St. James serves Preschool through 8th grade. Kindergarten through 4th grade are single grade classes while 5th/6th and 7th/8th are combined respectively. 5th - 8th Grade utilized departmentalization for core classes.

As Christian education is important to the members of St. James, the school has always been well supported and viewed as the main mission of the congregation. The school is strongly connected to the ministry of the congregation through the efforts and involvement of the pastor, vicar, teachers, congregation leadership, and congregation members. Many generations of children and families have been "empowered and equipped through Christ".

In 2019 St. James' Board of Elementary Education asked Pastor Loder to serve as the Lead Administrator for the school in which position he has been serving since.

2. Describe the community surrounding the school.

The area was first settled in 1855 by Morgan V. Cochran, who later sold his land to Charles Goodsell in 1863. Howard Lake developed as a railroad station.

Howard Lake was platted in 1869, and named after the nearby lake of Howard Lake. A post office was established under the name Howard in 1870; the post office was renamed Howard Lake in 1892 and remains in operation. One property in Howard Lake, the 1904 Howard Lake City Hall is listed on the National Register of Historic places.

As of the census of 2023, within a five-mile radius of St. James Lutheran Church and School, there is a population of 5,066 people, 1,932 households, and 474 families. The city's racial makeup is 94.1% White, 3.04% Hispanic/Latino, 2.17% Pacific Islander/American Indian/Other, 0.43% Black/African Americans, and 0.26% Asians.

37.1% of children in the area are ages 5 to 9, 36.7% of children of the area are ages 10 to 14, and 26.2% of the children of the area are ages 15-17. The average household size is 2.62.

3. List other significant information or factors that affect the school, its population, and environment.

Since Howard Lake is located on a lake, this makes us an ideal spot for travelers and visitors to stop here during the summer and enjoy the lake for fishing, boating, and swimming. Howard Lake is the Wright County Fair's home, bringing in tourists from all over the county and beyond. Howard Lake is the home of Dura Supreme, a nationally renowned cabinet manufacturer. The revenue earned from tourists and industry helps to keep Howard Lake a thriving community.

School Enrollment Information

1. What is the total current school enrollment?

109

2. Review the LCMS Early Childhood Center and School Statistical Report responses regarding the number of students per grade, the number of special education students, the students' church membership and the students' race. Then, comment on any features of the school's current enrollment that reveal significant or unusual information.

Nothing significant or unusual about the information.

3. How many children attend the supporting congregation(s)?

68 Students (7 Early Childhood and 61 K-8)

4. List the projected enrollment for each of the next five years and the basis for these projections.

School Year	Projected Enrollment	Rationale for projected enrollment
23/24	109	Current
24/25	115	Projected Early Childhood enrollment.
25/26	115-120	Demographics of Congregation/Community.
26/27	115-125	Demographics of Congregation/Community.
27/28	115-125	Demographics of Congregation/Community.

5. **Comment on the maximum number of children eligible to be enrolled considering space limitations. Discuss any significant or unusual features about this information.**

St. James currently has a 25-student cap per classroom to maintain comfortable space within the classroom and a low teacher-to-student ratio. This information has no significant or unusual features.

Staff Information – Teachers and Administrators

Teachers and Administrators

(Please complete a separate page(s) of information for EACH teacher.)

1. **Faculty Member:** Greg Baumann (7th/8th Grade)

2. **Academic degrees held:**

Degree: B.A. PE, History, El. Ed.

Institution: Concordia, Seward

3. **Academic credit and continuing education units earned over the last four years:**

Course:

Institution:

Graduate Hours:

College Degree(s):

4. **Teaching or school administration experience:**

School Name: St. James L.S.

Location: Howard Lake, MN

Dates: 8/83 - Present

School Name:

Location:

Dates:

5. **Current participation in congregational activities:**

Responsibility:

Participation: Worship

6. **Current membership in professional organizations:**

Organization Name:

Area of Focus:

7. **Current teaching license(s) held:**

Certificate(s):

Expiration Date:

1. Faculty Member: Nancy Butterfass (5-8 Music/School Secretary)

2. Academic degrees held:

Degree: B.S. Elementary Ed.

Institution: Concordia, St. Paul

3. Academic credit and continuing education units earned over the last four years:

Course:

Institution:

Graduate Hours:

College Degree(s):

4. Teaching or school administration experience:

School Name: Trinity LS

Location: Racine WI

Dates: 3/79 - 5/79

School Name: St. John's LS

Location: Beloit WI

Dates: 8/79 - 5/82

School Names: St. James LS

Location: Howard Lake, MN

Dates: 82 - 85, 95 - 97, 99 - Present

5. Current participation in congregational activities:

Responsibility: Organist/Music Coordinator

Participation: Worship

6. Current membership in professional organizations:

Organization Name:

Area of Focus:

7. Current teaching license(s) held:

Certificate(s):

Expiration Date:

1. Faculty Member: Angi Chabot (Kindergarten)

2. Academic degrees held:

Degree: B.S. El. Ed. Institution: Concordia, Seward

3. Academic credit and continuing education units earned over the last four years:

Course: Institution: Graduate Hours: College Degree(s):

4. Teaching or school administration experience:

<i>School Name: Bethlehem LS</i>	<i>Location: Minnetonka, MN</i>	<i>Dates: 97 - 99</i>
<i>School Name: Trinity LS</i>	<i>Location: Edwardsville, IL</i>	<i>Dates: 99 - 00</i>
<i>School Name: Good Shepherd LS</i>	<i>Location: Collinsville, IL</i>	<i>Dates: 00 - 09</i>
<i>School Name: Trinity LS</i>	<i>Location: Waconia, MN</i>	<i>Dates: 10 - 15</i>
<i>School Name: St. James LS</i>	<i>Location: Howard Lake, MN</i>	<i>Dates: 15 - Present</i>

5. Current participation in congregational activities:

Responsibility: Participation:

6. Current membership in professional organizations:

Organization Name: Area of Focus:

7. Current teaching license(s) held:

Certificate(s): Expiration Date:

1. Faculty Member: Luke Dahl (3rd Grade)

2. Academic degrees held:

Degree: BA and MA Institution: Concordia, St. Paul

3. Academic credit and continuing education units earned over the last four years:

*Course: Institution: Graduate Hours: College Degree(s):
120+ Hours of various continuing education*

4. Teaching or school administration experience:

*School Name: St. Paul LS Location: Fulda, MN Dates: 95 - 00
School Name: St. James LS Location: Howard Lake, MN Dates: 00 - 15, 18 - Present
School Name: First LS Location: Glencoe, MN Dates: 15 - 18
S.L.E.D. 06 - 07*

5. Current participation in congregational activities:

Responsibility: Choir Director (First, Glencoe), Organist (Various) Participation: Worship

6. Current membership in professional organizations:

Organization Name: Area of Focus:

7. Current teaching license(s) held:

Certificate(s): MN Teaching License Expiration Date: 2024

1. Faculty Member: Pam Halverson (2nd Grade)

2. Academic degrees held:

Degree: B.S. Special Education/M.A. Education Institution: St. Cloud State/Concordia, St. Paul

3. Academic credit and continuing education units earned over the last four years:

*Course: Institution: Graduate Hours: College Degree(s):
125 hours of various continuing education*

4. Teaching or school administration experience:

<i>School Name: Benson PS</i>	<i>Location: Benson, MN</i>	<i>Dates: 75 - 82</i>
<i>School Name: HLWW PS</i>	<i>Location: Howard Lake, MN</i>	<i>Dates: 84 - 86, 87 - 20</i>
<i>School Name: Dassel-Cokato PS</i>	<i>Location: Cokato, MN</i>	<i>Dates: 86 - 87</i>
<i>School Name: Homeschool</i>	<i>Location: Dassel, MN</i>	<i>Dates: 20 - 21</i>
<i>School Name: St. James LS</i>	<i>Location: Howard Lake, MN</i>	<i>Dates: 22 - Present</i>

5. Current participation in congregational activities:

Responsibility: Participation:

6. Current membership in professional organizations:

Organization Name: Area of Focus:

7. Current teaching license(s) held:

Certificate(s): Expiration Date:

1. Faculty Member: Lisa Kotila (5th/6th Grade)

2. Academic degrees held:

Degree: Bachelor's Institution: Concordia, St. Paul

3. Academic credit and continuing education units earned over the last four years:

*Course: Institution: Graduate Hours: College Degree(s):
125 hours of various continuing education*

4. Teaching or school administration experience:

*School Name: Peace LS Location: Fort Lauderdale, FL Dates: 93 - 96
School Name: St. James LS Location: Howard Lake, MN Dates: 97 - Present*

5. Current participation in congregational activities:

Responsibility: Participation: Worship

6. Current membership in professional organizations:

Organization Name: Area of Focus:

7. Current teaching license(s) held:

Certificate(s): MN Teaching License Expiration Date: 28

1. Faculty Member: Rev. Mark Loder (Administrator, 5th-8th Religion)

2. Academic degrees held:

Degree: B.M. Applied Music

Institution:

U. of South Dakota

M. Divinity

CTSFW

Advanced Ed. Certificate (Servant Leadership)

Bethel Seminary

3. Academic credit and continuing education units earned over the last four years:

Course:

Institution:

Graduate Hours:

College Degree(s):

4. Teaching or school administration experience:

School Name: St. James LS

Location: Howard Lake, MN

Dates: 15 - Present

School Name: St. James LS

Location: Howard Lake, MN

Dates: 19 - Present

S.L.E.D. 21 - 22

5. Current participation in congregational activities:

Responsibility: Pastor

Participation: Every week

6. Current membership in professional organizations:

Organization Name:

Area of Focus:

7. Current teaching license(s) held:

Certificate(s):

Expiration Date:

1. Faculty Member: Molly Loder (K-4th Music, Band, 5th-8th Science)

2. Academic degrees held:

Degree: B.M. Ed Institution: U. of South Dakota

3. Academic credit and continuing education units earned over the last four years:

Course: Institution: Graduate Hours: College Degree(s):

4. Teaching or school administration experience:

<i>School Name: Vermillion MS</i>	<i>Location: Vermillion S.D.</i>	<i>Dates: 00 - 04</i>
<i>School Name: Concordia LS</i>	<i>Location: Fort Wayne, IN</i>	<i>Dates: 04 -06</i>
<i>School Name: St. James LS</i>	<i>Location: Howard Lake, MN</i>	<i>Dates: 15 - Present</i>

5. Current participation in congregational activities:

Responsibility: Organist, Handchimes, Children's Choirs/Band
Participation: Bible Studies/LWML/Worship

6. Current membership in professional organizations:

Organization Name: Area of Focus:

7. Current teaching license(s) held:

Certificate(s): Expiration Date:

1. Faculty Member: Heidi Olsen (1st Grade)

2. Academic degrees held:

Degree: B.A. El. Ed. Institution: Concordia, St. Paul

3. Academic credit and continuing education units earned over the last four years:

Course: Institution: Graduate Hours: College Degree(s):

4. Teaching or school administration experience:

School Name: Rochester Central LS Location: Rochester, MN Dates: 95 - 01
School Name: St. James LS Location: Howard Lake, MN Dates: 12 - Present

5. Current participation in congregational activities:

Responsibility: Participation:

6. Current membership in professional organizations:

Organization Name: Area of Focus:

7. Current teaching license(s) held:

Certificate(s): Expiration Date:

1. Faculty Member: Chelsea Wagner (4th Grade)

2. Academic degrees held:

Degree: Bachelor of Education Institution: Bethel University

3. Academic credit and continuing education units earned over the last four years:

*Course: Colloquy Institution: Concordia, St. Paul Graduate Hours: College Degree(s):
125 hours of various continuing education*

4. Teaching or school administration experience:

*School Name: HLWW Location: Winsted, MN Dates: 17 - 18
School Name: St. James LS Location: Howard Lake, MN Dates: 19 - Present*

5. Current participation in congregational activities:

Responsibility: Participation:

6. Current membership in professional organizations:

Organization Name: Area of Focus:

7. Current teaching license(s) held:

Certificate(s): MN Teaching License Expiration Date: 2028

Staff Information – Support Staff

Support Staff (administrative assistant, bus driver, child care, etc.)

(Please complete one sheet for ALL support staff.)

<i>Name</i>	<i>Function</i>	<i>Hours Per Week</i>	<i>Years at School</i>
Amanda Holz	PK/Childcare	36	2
Stacey Sparkman	PK/Childcare	45	5
Tiffani Zinchini	Paraprofessional/Childcare	29.5	3

Information About Supplemental Services

Describe the nature and use of each supplemental service received from an outside agency. Include curriculum aids, materials for instruction (e.g., library materials, courses of study, audio-visual aids), testing and guidance services, health services, services relative to school attendance, transportation, and custodial services.

Describe supplemental services in the space below:

Curriculum: CurriculumTrak is used to organize, track, and evaluate the current curricula used, as well as provide clear and simple means for which to share with those who inquire as to what St. James uses for curriculum. Each teacher is responsible for maintaining their portion of CurriculumTrak.

Materials for Instruction: Each classroom is equipped with a smart board and/or television that is utilized for supplemental education and visual aids. Technology is used by students through tablets and Chromebooks for some assignments and projects, with a purposeful approach to keeping a balance between face-to-face discussion and the use of technology.

The Library is available to all students with each class having a specific time allotted for use of the library on Thursdays.

Courses of study are all presented with traditional textbooks. Lessons are enhanced through the use of supplemental material utilized by the teacher.

Testing/Assessments and Guiding Services: St. James uses STARS Assessment in Reading and Math in K-8th grade. There are three testing windows in the Fall, Winter, and Spring. Data gleaned from STARS is then put into an educational assessment cycle where teachers organize, adjust, and differentiate curriculum delivery for students.

Through the partnership with the HLWW school district, St. James can access title funding and services as needed. Further, a guidance counselor is available to provide initial counseling and assessment of further needs for mental health services.

Health Services: A school nurse from the HLWW public school comes in each year and checks to ensure all our students have the proper health records on file. The nurse notifies the school of any students who are missing information or have incorrect information, and then the school can update those records so they are correct. The school nurse also works with St. James staff on individual medical plans for students with medical conditions, provides training in Blood Borne Pathogens, CPR, and 1st Aide, and does student screenings for hearing and vision.

Services Relative to School Attendance: St. James has its own attendance and truancy policy. Within the policy is the notation of utilizing the county truancy process if such a need arises.

Transportation: Most of our students are transported to and from school either by their parents or the HLWW bus. HLWW also provides van service for special services for students who have IEPs with MAWESCO.

Custodial Services: Custodial services for the school are provided by an outside custodial company that cleans the school five days a week. Daily needs are handled by teachers, staff, students, and volunteers, though those needs are little if any, most weeks.

Surveys for School Constituents

NLSA survey questions are correlated with the seven Standard areas and are to be used at the beginning of a Self-Study process. Survey questions are developed for the following groups:

- Parents
- Teachers and Staff
- Students in Grades 1 – 3
- Students in Grades 4 – 12
- Board of Education (or similar body if governed or named differently)

A school may import the questions into an online/electronic instrument of choice and administer them to the groups as part of the needs-assessment process. Additional questions may be added to the survey, but NLSA survey questions may not be modified or removed. Scoring and narrative reflection of survey results for each survey are to be prepared and included in the Self-Study.

In the survey analysis:

- For each survey administered, answer whether the minimum response rate goal (Faculty – 80%, Students – 40%, Board – 80%, Parents – 20%) was met for each group; any trends in the comments concerning the administration of the surveys; and any trends that were significant to address.
- Discuss each constituent’s group results. Address noted strengths, areas for improvement, variances between the groups, variations over time (if applicable), and plans to address any lower scores than expected.
- Discuss how the results confirm or conflict with other feedback measures the school has collected. These could be focus groups, informal surveys, classroom evaluations, etc.
- Provide evidence of how data from surveys has been analyzed and used to adjust instruction, the school environment, or other aspects of the school program for the past three years (if applicable).
- Discuss how constituent feedback has helped further the school's mission over the past three years.

*Surveys are available to download on the NLSA page of Luthed.org.

Summarize the survey information in the space below:

[Parent](#)

[Teacher and Staff](#)

[Students in Grade 1 - 3](#)

[Students in Grade 4 - 8](#)

[Board of Elementary Education](#)

All surveys administered surpassed the response rate goal. The parent response was about 65%. Teacher and Staff response was 100%. Board response was 100%. Student response is 100% not counting students absent when surveys were administered.

Overall, the results of the surveys highlighted matters administration is already aware of both positively and negatively. Further discussion about particular results follows in specific to each survey.

These surveys help further understanding of how St. James can do what is done in a better and healthier way. The surveys are taken seriously and explored from the perspective of even the most unhelpful or confusing response can provide some feedback. It is a good posture for the administration, teachers, and staff to always ask “what can I learn from this criticism?”

Parent

One area of improvement highlighted through the parent surveys concerns curriculum and academic expectations. Though not all that negative, a few responses indicate that some work can be done at ensuring that all students are being challenged academically which can be accomplished through greater focus on differentiated instruction.

Another area of improvement highlighted through the parent surveys is that of cleanliness. That matter has been addressed as the former custodian has retired and a cleaning service has been hired. The cleaning service cleans the school five days a week and has made the building much cleaner.

As is the case with anonymous surveys there is always an opportunity to criticize without explanation or offering a solution. Communication was one area that received some criticism, which was a bit confusing for administration and the secretary. That being said, it’s a good opportunity to take a step back and ensure that communication is being done as best as possible.

One area of growth concerning communication is ensuring that new families coming into the school at the beginning of a new school year are well informed of the various aspects of life at St. James. As a new family pointed out, it is quite easy for those who have been a part of the system for some time to overlook matters that a new family may have no clue about. A new family orientation is now done at the beginning of each school year along with the regular back-to-school night assembly.

Technology was also addressed in the surveys, some parents wishing for more for their students. St. James offers just as much technology exposure as the public school system and does not have plans to expand that offering.

Teacher and Staff

Other than cleanliness of the building, which has already been addressed above, there was not any major negative response trend from the teacher and staff surveys. The surveys support the internal assessment that the overall function of the school is operating well and that the purpose of Equipping and Empowering Families and Students through Christ is going well. Pastor Loder has tried to foster an

environment that addresses issues as they arise and take the necessary steps to reconcile in the moment when available.

Students in Grade 1 - 3

The surveys from students in grade 1 - 3 were, for the most part, positive and unsurprising. One area of concern that was brought out through the surveys is that 45% of the students of that age are unsure or do not feel safe at school. This is a matter that is going to be explored immediately so that a better understanding can be had and a solution can be developed if necessary.

Another area of concern that will be addressed is student understanding of what is expected of them. About a quarter of the students were not sure or did not know what their teacher wanted them to learn. An exploration of what this means and how it can be fixed if necessary will be explored.

Students in Grade 4 - 8

The responses from this set of students did not present any information that was unknown. It did highlight an issue that has been ongoing and is continuing to be addressed, that being kindness toward one another. There is a bout of mean spiritedness going through the upper grades that is at times disheartening, but at other times a reminder that these are young students who need to be guided. Afterall, it is the purpose of St. James to equip and empower, and some of that best happens in the everyday addressing of behaviors and attitudes toward each other.

Board of Elementary Education

Responses from the BoEE did not present any surprises or major issues. What is known and is being worked on currently is a better connectivity between the BoEE and the school. As the members of the BoEE are volunteers and many do not have students in the school, there is not much exposure to the school. This has not created a negative issue at this point, but it would be good for a better, purposeful connection/relationship between the BoEE and the school. Currently, they are well informed as I, and the teacher liaison keep them informed.

STANDARD 1: PURPOSE

The school is purpose driven.

Overview

The purpose/philosophy/mission statement serves as the basis for forming school goals, learner outcomes and actions plans, as well as determining a direction for all activities of the school. Throughout the Self-Study process, every area of the school program is evaluated to determine if each aligns with the stated purpose.

The purpose Standard is critical in evaluating each of the Standards involved with the Self-Study. Since the purpose establishes who a school is, where they have been and what they are to become, it is critical that the Self-Study process begins with a thorough examination of Standard 1.

NOTE: In the interest of clarity related to the accreditation process, the word “purpose” may be used interchangeably with “mission” and “philosophy.”

Potential Evidence

Potential evidentiary documents provide support as the subcommittee determines the rating for each General Indicator of Success. The list below includes suggestions for the documentation but is not all-inclusive. The school reviews the list of potential evidence and determines those established at the school. Additional evidence that is not listed in the potential listing may also be presented. Evidence or lack thereof assists the school in reaching an agreement on a rating. Potential evidence does not need to be included with the Self-Study but is to be available for the Validation Team to review.

- Written school policies align with philosophy/mission.
- School social media presence and postings align with the school’s purpose.
- School learning objectives align with the school’s purpose.
- School policies align with the school’s purpose.
- The school’s presence in community marketing pieces highlights the school’s purpose.
- School publications, handbooks, marketing materials provide evidence of Lutheran identity.
- Promotional materials give evidence of Lutheran identity.
- School website provides evidence of Lutheran identity.
- School evangelism plan or written document outlining practices of sharing the Gospel in the school and community.
- Christian symbols are appropriately and prominently displayed throughout the school.

Potential Practices

Like potential evidence, potential practices are identified to demonstrate how well the school is meeting the indicators. A practice describes something that is being done at the school. It is often supported with written documentation, but it can be observed in classroom activities or daily routines. Schools are to identify the practices in place. A list of suggested practices is included in the Self-Study Report, but it is not all-inclusive. The identification of practices allows the subcommittee to arrive at a rating that reflects the condition currently in place at the school. It is the combination of evidence and practices that provide the support for an indicator rating.

- Teachers recognize and verbalize that the teaching of the faith is the main purpose of the school.
- Teaching of the Lutheran faith is allocated with appropriate classroom time in the daily schedule and integrated throughout the curriculum.
- The school promotes a positive Christian image through its public relations and publications.
- The sponsoring congregation(s) provides spiritual support for the school and its students.
- The school encourages students to participate in the congregational life of the parish.
- Pastors and teachers who are members of the supporting congregations demonstrate support for one another and each other's ministries.
- Teachers and staff members seek to be instruments of the Holy Spirit in helping students develop and grow in their relationship with Jesus Christ.
- The school cooperates with district and national offices of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.
- The school effectively implements a plan for evangelism of un-churched or marginally churched children and their families attending the school.
- The Lutheran school's policies, programs and life within the school emanate from the example and teachings of Jesus Christ and demonstrate the proper understanding of Law and Gospel.
- The school conducts weekly worship (chapel) experiences intentionally designed to consciously and systematically strengthen the Christian faith of all members of the school community.
- Co-curricular and extra-curricular activities enhance the school's purpose.
- Part-time employees and volunteer coaches, directors and extra-curricular adult leaders embody and reflect the school's purpose.
- Service projects are informed by the school's purpose.

Required Responses

Narrative responses are to be written for all questions at the beginning of each Standard area and included in the Self-Study document. The answers to these questions provide a school with the opportunity to describe how it meets the needs of students. This also allows the school to indicate any nuances that are unique to the school's learning environment.

1. How was the school's purpose developed?

During preparation for accreditation, in October of 2016, the subcommittee for standard one researched and developed a new written purpose. On October 24, 2016, this purpose was unanimously approved by the present Board of Education of St. James Lutheran School. The Board of Education presented it to the Leadership Council of St. James Lutheran Church for further review. After some discussion and consultation with Pastor Loder, the purpose of "Equipping and Empowering Students and Families in Christ" was adopted.

2. Describe how the school's purpose aligns with the purpose(s) of its supporting congregation.

The congregation and school share the same purpose.

3. Describe the process that was last used to review, clarify, and renew the school's purpose.

The purpose is reviewed yearly by the teachers/staff and the Board of Elementary Education through a study guided by Pastor Loder. Clarification is accomplished through biblical exploration and application during discussion and study. Renewal of focus of the purpose is applied to each year's theme, which is set through the use of the National Lutheran Schools Week theme and as laid out in the Chapel Talks.

4. How does the school demonstrate its unique Lutheran identity through its alignment with vision, values and actions?

The Statement of Purpose, which drives all actions and interactions within the school, centers on Christ and Scripture alone and a mission to be servant leaders for Him through, but not limited to

- Weekly Chapel led by LCMS pastors and teachers
- Daily LCMS-based devotions
- Prayers throughout the day and also grade level prayer contributions for the weekly newsletter
- Inclusion of LCMS doctrine in all curricular areas
- Opportunities to serve through singing/playing at worship, acolyte, ushering, setting up the Fellowship Hall for funerals/dinners/church organized activities
- Singing at the local care center and senior living center
- Service projects that are given to local care center and living center
- Signs, bulletin boards, murals, framed art, and posters displayed inside and outside of the school building proclaim our belief in Jesus and are seen by people in the congregation and the general public when they enter the building and gymnasium

5. How does the school's purpose inform its strategic plan?

The purpose is the starting point and foundation of what happens at St. James.

6. Describe how the school's purpose is reflected in the teaching/learning environment in classrooms.

The purpose, which drives all actions and interactions within the school, centers on Christ and Scripture alone. Through sound Biblical and academic training, the mission is to equip and empower students to be faithful Christians. The classroom environment and student/teacher interactions promotes proper etiquette, respect, and Christ-like character-building expectations

7. Describe how the school's purpose is evident within informal teaching/learning environments and co-curricular and extra-curricular events.

In very much the same way as the answer for number 6 above describes. In all things provided by, conducted, and held at St. James, the purpose is the foundational standard of what is done.

8. How does the school's purpose inform daily operational processes and procedures?

Again, in very much the same way as the answer for number 6 above describes. Processes and procedures are in place to provide the framework through which the purpose of the school able to be enacted and upheld.

9. Describe the process used to inform new employees about the school's purpose and the appropriate engagement employees are expected and encouraged to model.

New teachers/staff are given the Teacher/Staff Handbook, which contains the purpose and all other expectations. This handbook is reviewed and approved by Pastor Loder and the Board of Elementary with input from the teachers/staff. The Teacher/Staff Handbook is worked through at the beginning of each year to review the expectations presented within.

Required Evidence

Required Evidence must be attached to the Self-Study Report and used to assign a rating and complete the written comments for each General Indicator of Success. Place an "X" in the box and attach required documentation.

- Final [School Action Plan](#) from the previous accreditation (if applicable)
- [Strategic Plan](#) (if applicable and currently utilized by the school) ([Vision Casting](#))
- Written purpose/philosophy/mission statement ([Family Handbook p. 5](#))

Required Indicators of Success

Required indicators must be answered "YES" and supported by evidence and comments for the school to be accredited in good standing. Place an "X" in the box and identify supporting evidence and practices.

1:01* The school's written purpose embraces a Lutheran identity that is rooted in Holy Scripture and is committed to faith formation, academic excellence and Christian service.

YES

NO

Identify and list supporting Evidence or Practices:

- Philosophy and Purpose defined in the [Family Handbook](#) as well as the [Teacher/Staff Handbook](#). Within the wording of the Philosophy and Purpose within these documents, clear examples from Scripture are given which support the overall philosophy of the school as well as the purpose.
- An [exegetical study](#) was completed and presented to teachers/staff and continues to be a source of morning devotions and in-service materials.
- Monthly [Teacher/Staff Session](#) and [Board of Elementary Education Sessions](#) begin with the recitation of the purpose.

Comments:

The school's purpose is clearly [displayed in each classroom](#), is on the materials printed and distributed, on the church bulletin, on the website, and discussed and emphasized throughout the various opportunities from teaching to meeting among students and staff.

1:02* School leadership and staff members understand and accept the purpose of the school.

YES

NO

Identify and list supporting Evidence or Practices:

- An [exegetical study](#) was completed and presented to teachers/staff and continues to be a source of morning devotions and in-service materials.
- Monthly [Teacher/Staff Session](#) and Board of Elementary Education Sessions begin with the recitation of the purpose.
- The language of the [Teacher/Staff Covenant](#) that is signed yearly is built from and supports the purpose.

Comments:

Pastor Loder makes an intentional effort to focus on the purpose of the school at the beginning of each year during the in-service, as well as throughout the year by drawing connections between various discussions and the purpose.

General Indicators of Success

General Indicators of Success help the school to quantify its compliance with the Required Standards. The assignment of a rating for each General Indicator of Success is determined by the evidence and the practices that support the rating. Each general indicator is to be rated by the subcommittee, using the criterion below with the corresponding point value. A written response is required for every indicator in the “Comments” section.

1:03: School leadership (administration and governing board) uses the mission statement as the foundation and reference for all planning.

Schools must demonstrate with documented evidence and practice that they comply with the following to function at the “operational” level. Place an “X” in the boxes below which currently apply to the school.

- The school’s purpose was developed in accordance with governance policy.
- The school’s purpose is engaged, aligned and enacted with its vision, values, school goals, learner outcomes and student activities.
- The school’s mission statement supports and aligns with the congregational mission statement.

Place an “X” in the Rating Box that Reflects the Actual Condition of the School

- Highly Functional (4)** **Operational (3)** **Emerging (2)** **Not Evident (1)**
-

Identify and list supporting Evidence or Practices:

- [Church By-Laws \(Board of Elementary Education\)](#)
- [Family Handbook](#)
- [Teacher/Staff Handbook](#)
- [Church Bulletin](#)

Comments:

As already stated, the purpose “Equipping and Empowering Families and Students through Christ” is shared by both Congregation and School. When opportunities arise for ongoing study and development, the purpose is referred to first and all that is done is filtered through the purpose.

1:04: School leadership (administration and board) regularly assembles school constituencies (including but not limited to faculty, staff, parents, students and congregational stakeholders) to review, clarify and renew the school’s stated purpose.

Schools must demonstrate with documented evidence and practice that they comply with the following to function at the “operational” level. Place an “X” in the boxes below which currently apply to the school.

The school’s purpose is communicated effectively to staff, students and stakeholders.

The school regularly evaluates and reviews the alignment of purpose, vision, values, school goals, learner outcomes and student activities.

Place an “X” in the Rating Box that Reflects the Actual Condition of the School

Highly Functional (4) Operational (3) Emerging (2) Not Evident (1)

Identify and list supporting Evidence or Practices:

- [Teacher/Staff Covenant](#)
- [Signage throughout the school](#)
- [Beginning of the year in-service](#)
- [Board of Christian Education Agenda](#)
- [Family Handbook](#)

Comments:

The school’s purpose is reviewed yearly by the Teachers/Staff and School Board with the purpose of study, familiarity, and any changes or adjustments in focus needed. This is done during the beginning of the year in-service and late summer Board of Christian Education Session. As for engagement with families, the purpose is reviewed at the Information Meeting at the beginning of the school year.

1:05: The school’s purpose is displayed and reflected in school activities and in the teaching/learning environment in classrooms.

Schools must demonstrate with documented evidence and practice that they comply with the following to function at the “operational” level. Place an “X” in the boxes below which currently apply to the school.

- The school’s purpose is displayed in each classroom and in the hallways.
- The school’s purpose is readily seen on the school’s website.
- The school’s purpose is included in written communications distributed to families, such as the PTL handbook and promotional materials that are supplied to prospective families.
- School events, curriculum and discipline are aligned with the school’s mission statement and purpose and promote a positive teaching/learning environment.

Place an “X” in the Rating Box that Reflects the Actual Condition of the School

- Highly Functional (4) Operational (3) Emerging (2) Not Evident (1)
-

Identify and list supporting Evidence or Practices:

- [School purpose displayed](#) in each classroom as well as in the church
- [Church and School Website](#)
- [School Newsletter](#)
- [Family Handbook](#)
- [Church/School Letterhead](#)

Comments:

The purpose of St. James is clearly displayed throughout the building, the church, and various documents for distribution.

1:06: New employees are informed about the school’s purpose and its appropriate engagement.

Schools must demonstrate with documented evidence and practice that they comply with the following to function at the “operational” level. Place an “X” in the boxes below which currently apply to the school.

- New employees are given an orientation packet and have an orientation meeting with the school administrator.

New employees utilize mentors to assist them in learning about the school's purpose and how to carry it out.

The school's purpose is outlined in the job description for each employee.

Place an "X" in the Rating Box that Reflects the Actual Condition of the School

Highly Functional (4)

Operational (3)

Emerging (2)

Not Evident (1)

Identify and list supporting Evidence or Practices:

- [Teacher/Staff Handbook](#)
- [Teacher Servant Description](#)
- [Teacher/Staff Covenant](#)
- [Orientation/Mentoring Handbook](#)

Comments:

Orientation is handled by the administrator by walking the new employee through the Teacher/Staff Handbook, Covenant, and Servant Description ensuring that they understand the purpose of St. James and considerations of abiding by the purpose. A mentoring program has been established and will be utilized for the first time with future hires at the school.

Summary and Response Actions

Summary and response actions, related to the school's strengths and items needing improvement, are to be provided. Subcommittees carry on the primary work of evaluating the school's compliance with the assigned Standard through a thoughtful and purposeful evaluation of each of the General Indicators of Success. Based on any general indicator ratings of "1" or "2", the school must develop specific plans to improve. Plans must include specific targeted completion dates and assignments. At the discretion of the school, actions may be developed for indicators that have been rated as "3".

A. Are the Required Indicators of Success met? (YES / NO)

Yes

B. Based on evidence, what are the strengths of the school related to Standard 1?

The purpose of St. James is clearly stated, communicated, and worked through regularly.

C. Based on evidence, what are the challenges of the school related to Standard 1? All areas identified as "emerging" [2] or "not evident" [1] must be addressed in the School Action Plan.

The purpose of St. James could be included in more literature.

D. What is the school's average rating for all General Indicators of Success for Standard 1, rounded to the nearest tenth?

STANDARD	RATING
1:03	3
1:04	3
1:05	3
1:06	3
Total:	12
Average: (Total ÷ 4)	3

STANDARD 2: RELATIONSHIPS

The school demonstrates its purpose through relationships.

Note: Standard 2 is divided into three categories: school and congregation, school and community and school climate. Introductory comments and necessary responses are required for each of the three sections. Standard 2A, School and Congregation, does not apply when a Lutheran school is operating outside of a highly developed relationship with a single congregation or group of congregations.

STANDARD 2A: SCHOOL AND CONGREGATION

Overview

The Lutheran school has a special relationship with its operating congregation(s). The school concerns itself with the ministry of the whole church to fulfill its purpose as a Lutheran school. To do this, the school seeks opportunities to enhance relationships with the local congregation(s), its district and the national church body.

Potential Evidence

Potential evidentiary documents provide support as the subcommittee determines the rating for each General Indicator of Success. The list includes suggestions for the documentation, but is not all-inclusive. The school reviews the list of potential evidence and determines those established at the school. Additional evidence that is not listed in the potential listing may also be presented. Evidence or lack thereof, assists the school in reaching an agreement on a rating. Potential evidence does not need to be included with the Self-Study, but is to be available for the Validation Team to review.

- [School and church calendars](#)
- [Church and school websites](#)
- [Church bulletins](#) and [newsletters \(School Newsletter\)](#)
- [Minutes from congregational meetings emphasizing the church-school relationship](#)
- [List of educators' participation in the activities of the sponsoring congregation\(s\)](#)
- Summary of students' church attendance statistics
- Summary of climate survey results
- [Faculty handbook describing church-school relationship \(p. 4\)](#)
- Written school evangelism plan or written document outlining practices of sharing the Gospel in the school and community
- Attendance at District conferences and events

Potential Practices

Like potential evidence, potential practices are identified to demonstrate how well the school is meeting the indicators. A practice describes something that is being done at the school. It is often supported with written documentation, but it can be observed in classroom activities or daily routines. Schools are to identify the practices in place. A list of suggested practices is included in the Self-Study Report, but it is not all-inclusive. The identification of practices allows the subcommittee to arrive at a rating that reflects the condition currently in place at the school. It is the combination of evidence and practices that provide the support for an indicator rating.

- School choirs sing at worship services
- Student involvement in activities of the sponsoring congregation(s)
- Pastoral involvement
- Pastor relates well, offering services to school families who do not belong to the sponsoring congregation(s)
- Teachers regularly worship and actively participate in activities of the sponsoring congregation
- Teachers participate in school-required conferences and events
- Teachers participate in district-sponsored conferences and events.
- CMIFs (Commissioned Minister Information Forms) are completed and regularly updated by commissioned teachers.
- CMIFs (Commissioned Minister Information Forms) are completed and regularly updated by commissioned teachers
- Required reporting materials are submitted to district and national bodies on time and are completed with quality

Required Responses

Narrative responses are to be written for all questions at the beginning of each Standard area and included in the Self-Study document. The answers to these questions provide a school with the opportunity to describe how it meets the needs of students. This also allows the school to indicate any nuances that are unique to the school's learning environment.

1. Describe the relationship between the school and its congregation(s).

St. James School is the primary mission of St. James Church. The united relationship recognizes the ministry of both Church and School as a collaborative reality. St. James Lutheran Church provides financial support for the school. Sixty percent of the school's budget is covered by the stewardship of congregation members. The congregation also supports the school through many parishioner-supported activities such as Support-a-Student (a scholarship program), recycling programs, Thrivent Choice Dollars, and SCRIP. The promotion of school events, activities, and school celebrations is publicized and promoted through the weekly bulletin and the monthly newsletter. Many members of the congregation, along with school staff and parents, enhance the congregation's ministry by sharing their time, talents, and gifts.

2. Describe how pastors from the sponsoring congregation(s) are involved at the school.

Pastor Loder and the vicar are involved in teaching the religion classes of most of the grade levels three days a week. Pastor and vicar rotate in the leading chapel on Wednesdays. Pastor Loder, serving also as the Lead Administrator, is in the building for most of the day on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday completing administrative responsibilities as well as handling behavior issues, counseling of students, and observations of classrooms.

3. In what ways are students involved in the life of the (sponsoring) congregation(s)?

Sixth through eighth-grade students acolyte in church services and chapel. Seventh and eighth-grade students can serve as ushers. Class choirs participate by singing on scheduled Sundays and special occasions. The band also performs on Sundays and special occasions including concerts. The students for the congregation also present Christmas programs and Advent services. Students and their families are involved in various activities and events within the congregation. These include, but are not limited to Sunday School, VBS, setting up the Fellowship Hall for dinners and funerals, and activities during National Lutheran Schools Week.

4. What are the ways the school connects families to association churches and their ministries?

Though not a regular occurrence, if there are families who attend St. James from other communities encouragement is given for them to connect to the church in their town if there is one. Church attendance is emphasized as important to their lives as a Christian family.

5. Describe the relationship of the school with its LCMS district and national offices.

The school is a ministry of a congregation that is a member church of the LCMS. As such, the school will participate in district and synod-sponsored events as available as well as support the synod and district as much as possible.

6. Describe how all teachers are engaged in in-service, workshops and volunteer efforts.

At various times throughout the school year, the teachers attend internal in-service sessions and workshops that are designed to equip and address various needs and issues within the school. Volunteering is not readily available for the teachers within the school as the PTL and other volunteers help in areas that benefit from volunteer help. That being said, the teachers volunteer where and when needed if asked, such as the monthly Board of Elementary Education sessions as the teacher liaison to the board.

7. Describe the involvement of called workers in required district conferences, workshops and volunteer efforts.

All of the called and contract workers attend the yearly teacher conferences, workshops, and volunteer efforts when able and available.

8. How does the school support the work of the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod?

The answer to this question is the same as number 5 above in that when programs are available to support various work efforts within the synod, St. James School supports those efforts as best possible at the time.

Required Indicator of Success

Required indicators must be answered “YES” and supported by evidence and comments for the school to be accredited in good standing. Place an “X” in the box and identify supporting evidence and practices.

2A:01* The school is operated by one or more of the congregations of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) or maintains an active Recognized Service Organization (RSO) status with the Synod (if an RSO, provide the latest RSO renewal).

YES

NO

Identify and list supporting Evidence or Practices:

- St. James School is a ministry of St. James Lutheran Church of Howard Lake, MN
 - [Website](#)
 - [Church By-Laws](#) (Board of Christian Education)

Comments:

St. James School has been a ministry of St. James Lutheran Church since 1918.

General Indicators of Success

General Indicators of Success help the school to quantify its compliance with the Required Standards. The assignment of a rating for each General Indicator of Success is determined by the evidence and the practices that support the rating. Each general indicator is to be rated by the subcommittee, using the criterion below

with the corresponding point value. A written response is required for every indicator in the "Comments" section.

2A:02: The school is an extension of the ministry of its sponsoring congregation(s). Church and school work together effectively to accomplish goals related to a well-defined purpose.

Schools must demonstrate with documented evidence and practice that they comply with the following to function at the "operational" level. Place an "X" in the boxes below which currently apply to the school.

- The pastor is acknowledged as the spiritual leader of the whole congregation, including the school.

- The pastor demonstrates that he is the spiritual leader of the school and congregation.

- The congregation provides spiritual support for the school and its students.

- Pastor(s) and school staff regularly demonstrate support for each other's ministry.

Place an "X" in the Rating Box that Reflects the Actual Condition of the School

- Highly Functional (4) Operational (3) Emerging (2) Not Evident (1)
-

Identify and list supporting Evidence or Practices:

- Pastor Loder is the Lead Administrator of the School
- Pastor Loder provides spiritual care to students as needed
- [Pastor Loder and the Vicar lead weekly chapel](#)
- Pastor Loder leads the school body in reciting the [Catechism](#) during morning announcements
- Pastor regularly encourages discussion of [Blessing/Challenge/Thanksgiving](#) at Staff Sessions
- [The congregation regularly prays for the school in worship](#)
- [The Board of Elders regularly includes the school in prayer at the end of their monthly sessions](#)

Comments:

Congregation members of St. James view the school as a great mission for the community and beyond. Through faithful support financially and spiritually, the congregation is regularly engaged in the school. The connection of pastoral care by Pastor Loder as he serves both as pastor and school administrator is a blessing in that the relationship built with students, teachers, and staff is strong. Though not every relationship is as strong as desired, a professional relationship and atmosphere is regularly fostered.

2A:03: The school concerns itself with the ministry of the whole church and seeks opportunities to support and enhance relationships with its congregation, its district and the national church body.

Schools must demonstrate with documented evidence and practice that they comply with the following to function at the “operational” level. Place an “X” in the boxes below which currently apply to the school.

- Students participate regularly in congregational life through planned activities available and coordinated with the congregation.
- School staff members are actively involved in worship and congregational life in their parish.
- The school and congregation plan and work together on behalf of families who do not have an identified church home or who do not attend church regularly.
- The school supports LCMS missions.
- Called teachers participate in required district conferences and events.

Place an “X” in the Rating Box that Reflects the Actual Condition of the School

- Highly Functional (4)** **Operational (3)** **Emerging (2)** **Not Evident (1)**

Identify and list supporting Evidence or Practices:

- [Student choirs and band provide special music for Sunday services during the school year](#)
- [Students present a yearly Christmas Program at the church](#)
- Students help with various congregational fellowship function by setting up, serving, and greeting
- [Students, starting in the 5th grade are invited to acolyte or usher for worship services](#)
- Teachers and Staff regularly attend worship services and are involved in Bible study
- Teachers and Staff attend various functions offered by the congregation such as concerts or workshops
- Pastor Loder makes connections with families that do not have a church home and encourages them to attend worship regularly
- The school supports LCMS missions when available through chapel offering or other special fundraising activities such as [Hearts for Jesus](#)
- The teachers and staff participate in required conferences and events as well as other offerings they may be interested in attending

Comments:

St. James Church and School have a very good supportive relationship. The congregation is very supportive of the school. The school supports the district and synod when possible and as necessary.

Summary and Response Actions

Summary and response actions, related to the school’s strengths and items needing improvement, are to be provided. Subcommittees carry on the primary work of evaluating the school’s compliance with the assigned Standard through a thoughtful and purposeful evaluation of each of the general indicators of success. Based on any general indicator ratings of “1” or “2”, the school must develop specific plans to improve. Plans must include specific targeted completion dates and assignments. At the discretion of the school, actions may be developed for indicators that have been rated as “3”.

A. Are the Required Indicators of Success met for Standard 2A? (YES / NO)

Yes

B. Based on evidence, what are the strengths of the school related to Standard 2A?

The school is greatly supported by the congregation.

C. Based on evidence, what are the challenges of the school related to Standard 2A? All areas identified as “emerging” [2] or “not evident” [1] must be addressed in the School Action Plan.

The school and congregation can find more ways to do collaborative activities.

D. What is the school’s average rating for all General Indicators of Success for Standard 2A, rounded to the nearest tenth?

STANDARD	RATING
2A:02	3
2A:03	3
Total:	6
Average: (Total ÷ 2)	3

STANDARD 2B: SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY

Overview

The Lutheran school seeks to serve the community (the area in which the school is located) by enlisting and involving community participation. The school must be sensitive to local and state requirements and culture if it is to effectively relate to its community.

Potential Evidence

Potential evidentiary documents provide support as the subcommittee determines the rating for each General Indicator of Success. The list includes suggestions for the documentation, but is not all-inclusive. The school reviews the list of potential evidence and determines those established at the school. Additional evidence that is not listed in the potential listing may also be presented. Evidence or lack thereof, assists the school in reaching an agreement on a rating. Potential evidence does not need to be included with the Self-Study, but is to be available for the Validation Team to review.

- A sampling of public relations materials
- [School enrollment policy](#)
- List of parent education programs
- [Constitution, bylaws, organizational and/or flow chart of parent support groups](#)
- [Parent and student handbooks](#)
- [Parent Education Resources](#)
- [Written guidance for volunteers serving in the school](#)
- Student involvement in community activities
- [Guidelines for preparing school volunteers](#)
- Calendar and schedule of building use
- List of class field trips to community resource centers
- School newsletter articles describing community-service projects
- [Parent climate survey results](#)
- [Demographic study](#)

Potential Practices

Like potential evidence, potential practices are identified to demonstrate how well the school is meeting the indicators. A practice describes something that is being done at the school. It is often supported with written documentation, but it can be observed in classroom activities or daily routines. Schools are to identify the practices in place. A list of suggested practices is included in the Self-Study Report, but it is not all-inclusive. The identification of practices allows the subcommittee to arrive at a rating that reflects the condition currently in place at the school. It is the combination of evidence and practices that provide the support for an indicator rating.

- The school is known and respected in its community.
- Parents are active participants, volunteering and supporting the school in a variety of ways.
- Faculty members are actively engaged in community-service activities.
- Students are recognized for their community involvement.

Required Responses

Narrative responses are to be written for all questions at the beginning of each Standard area and included in the Self-Study document. The answers to these questions provide a school with the opportunity to describe how it meets the needs of students. This also allows the school to indicate any nuances that are unique to the school's learning environment.

1. How does the school's demographic profile reflect the demographic profile of its surrounding community?

St. James School's demographic mirrors the community of Howard Lake which is primarily caucasian.

2. Describe the school's program of public relations to the community.

- Signs are posted at some of the entrances to Howard Lake.
- [Advertisement for enrollment is shared across social media](#)
- [Special events are shared across social media](#)
- [Regular posts are made to social media sharing various activities](#)
- [School information is listed on the local newspaper's community information](#)
- [Students visit the nursing home a few times a year](#)
- [Interactive relationship with the Police and Fire Departments](#)

3. List and describe the things the school has done to relate to and serve its community.

The school provides a facility for the community to use for sports, including traveling basketball and JO volleyball. It also provides a place for family reunions, community meetings, and large group functions. The community is invited to participate in or attend VBS and PTL activities. The church and school has offered parenting classes through Connected Families.

4. Describe the school's relationship with the local public schools.

The relationship with the local public school district is very good. St. James is the only elementary school in Howard Lake and the majority of the students from St. James go to the HLWW High School. St. James students are able to participate in all activities offered at the public school. Many resources that have already been described are given through the district. The food service at St. James is provided by the school district. Pastor Loder is included on the district's quarterly safety forums.

5. List and describe the ways faculty members are involved in community events.

The faculty and staff are involved in a variety of activities and events within their local communities such as community theatre, athletics, Love Inc, American Legion, Lions club, and local parades.

Required Evidence

Required Evidence must be attached to the Self-Study Report and used to assign a rating and complete the written comments for each General Indicator of Success. Place an "X" in the box and attach required documentation.

Written nondiscrimination statement ([Family Handbook p. 8](#))

Required Indicator of Success

Required indicators must be answered "YES" and supported by evidence and comments for the school to be accredited in good standing. Place an "X" in the box and identify supporting evidence and practices.

2B:01* A statement of nondiscrimination is evident in school-printed materials and assures that students are admitted without regard to race, color or national origin.

YES

NO

Identify and list supporting Evidence or Practices:

- [Family Handbook](#)
- [Teacher/Staff Handbook](#)
- [Website](#)

Comments:

As found in the evidence pieces, a statement of nondiscrimination is included on various documents and sites that are initial points of entry for new families considering St. James School.

General Indicators of Success

General Indicators of Success help the school to quantify its compliance with the Required Standards. The assignment of a rating for each General Indicator of Success is determined by the evidence and the practices that support the rating. Each general indicator is to be rated by the subcommittee, using the criterion below with the corresponding point value. A written response is required for every indicator in the "Comments" section.

2B:02: The school’s student population reflects the ethnic, racial and economic diversity of the community in which it is located.

Schools must demonstrate with documented evidence and practice that they comply with the following to function at the “operational” level. Place an “X” in the boxes below which currently apply to the school.

- The school studies the community demographics and compares the information to the demographics of the student body.
- The school embraces and celebrates the demographic diversity of the students it serves and the surrounding community.
- The school has developed ways to enroll students from the community who do not have the economic resources to support tuition-driven enrollment.

Place an “X” in the Rating Box that Reflects the Actual Condition of the School

- Highly Functional (4) Operational (3) Emerging (2) Not Evident (1)
-

Identify and list supporting Evidence or Practices:

- [Howard Lake Area Demographics Report](#)
- [Student enrollment reflects the demographic \(not much\) diversity of the surrounding population](#)
- [Tuition Assistance](#)
- [Tuition Payment Agreement](#)

Comments:

St. James is located in an area of rural Minnesota that does not have much variance of demographics. The school population reflects such being primarily caucasian. As a means for ensuring that all families of the area are able to attend St. James School families are informed that financial assistance is available for all, no questions asked, or tuition payment agreements at any amount may be made. The message we share is that no student will be turned away for financial reasons.

2B:03: The school promotes and encourages the involvement of its teachers and students in community activities.

Schools must demonstrate with documented evidence and practice that they comply with the following to function at the “operational” level. Place an “X” in the boxes below which currently apply to the school.

- The school seeks ways to involve its students and teachers in service to the community.

- Staff members are encouraged and provided with opportunities, planned by the school and its congregation, to participate in community activities, and service organizations.

- Staff members are engaged in community service.

Place an “X” in the Rating Box that Reflects the Actual Condition of the School

- Highly Functional (4) Operational (3) Emerging (2) Not Evident (1)
-

Identify and list supporting Evidence or Practices:

- [Singing and visiting the local nursing home](#)
- [Craft projects done and sent to the local nursing home](#)
- [Every other year the chapel offering supports a local entity such as LoveInc or the Wright County Food Shelf](#)
- Families are invited to assist at the Wright County Fair
- Teachers/Staff and Students assist with the Community Meal
- [Teachers/Staff and Students assist with the Gala through class projects!](#)
- [Community support and attendance of the St. James Gala](#)
- [Community support through the School Garage Sale](#)

Comments:

This is an area that St. James is growing in and working toward identifying other ways to be engaged with the community. Not a lot of pictures are taken at various events that include service as the intent of service is not to bring attention to ourselves.

2B:04: The school has an active Parent-Teacher Organization and/or other parent support groups.

Schools must demonstrate with documented evidence and practice that they comply with the following to function at the “operational” level. Place an “X” in the boxes below which currently apply to the school.

- The school sponsors educational opportunities for parents and provides a wide variety of parenting resources.
- Support groups (e.g., Parent Teacher League, Booster Club, prayer support groups) contribute to the overall good of the school and congregation to support and maintain the school’s mission and goals.

Place an “X” in the Rating Box that Reflects the Actual Condition of the School

Highly Functional (4) Operational (3) Emerging (2) Not Evident (1)

Identify and list supporting Evidence or Practices:

- [PTL Servant Description](#)
- [PTL Session Notes](#)
- [Parent Connection Workshop 1](#)
- [Parent Connection Workshop 2](#)
- [Connected Families Teacher Foundation](#)
- [Connected Families Teacher Study](#)

Comments:

St. James has a very active and supportive PTL that provides great opportunities for families to volunteer at the school as well as support the teachers/staff. Fundraisers such as the St. James Gala is organized and held by the PTL which provides great financial support for the school

A challenging reality is that while various opportunities for parenting resources have been made and are available, there is little to no engagement. St. James is currently revamping and exploring what and how these resources can be offered. Material and resources from [Connected Families](#) is the foundation for the ongoing approach for providing support for families.

2B:05: The school is known, respected and maintains a positive perception in its community.

Schools must demonstrate with documented evidence and practice that they comply with the following to function at the “operational” level. Place an “X” in the boxes below which currently apply to the school.

- The school is known and respected in its community.

- The school regularly and frequently shares information with its constituents.

- Good relationships exist with the local public schools.

- School facilities are available, when practical, for use by appropriate community groups and activities.

Place an “X” in the Rating Box that Reflects the Actual Condition of the School

- Highly Functional (4)** **Operational (3)** **Emerging (2)** **Not Evident (1)**
-

Identify and list supporting Evidence or Practices:

- [Faith in Blue Community Event](#)
- [Fire Department Visits](#)
- [Police Chief Visits](#)
- [St. James Facebook page](#)
- [Facilities Usage](#)
- [School Calendar](#)

Comments:

St. James has a positive relationship with community leaders such as the police and fire departments. The local businesses are supporters of St. James as they make donations to the St. James Gala as well as provide various support of food and space throughout the school year. The preschool provides a Christian and caring environment for children in the community. The community is also invited to participate in or attend VBS and PTL activities. The school provides a facility (our Fellowship Hall) for the community to use for sports, including traveling basketball and JO volleyball. It also provides a place for family reunions, community meetings, and large group functions to meet. The school has a friendly and cooperative working relationship with Howard Lake-Waverly-Winsted, District 2687. St. James receives various services through the school district and houses a cook from their staff who prepares and serves breakfast and lunch for the student body.

Summary and Response Actions

Summary and response actions, related to the school's strengths and items needing improvement, are to be provided. Subcommittees carry on the primary work of evaluating the school's compliance with the assigned Standard through a thoughtful and purposeful evaluation of each of the General Indicators of Success. Based on any general indicator ratings of "1" or "2", the school must develop specific plans to improve. Plans must include specific targeted completion dates and assignments. At the discretion of the school, actions may be developed for indicators that have been rated as "3".

A. Are the Required Indicators of Success met for Standard 2B? (YES / NO)

Yes

B. Based on evidence, what are the strengths of the school related to Standard 2B?

St. James has a great relationship with leaders in the community as well as the local school district.

C. Based on evidence, what are the challenges of the school related to Standard 2B? All areas identified as "emerging" [2] or "not evident" [1] must be addressed in the School Action Plan.

St. James administration can work more intentionally to get teachers/staff involved in the community.

D. What is the school's average rating for all General Indicators of Success for Standard 2B, rounded to the nearest tenth?

STANDARD	RATING
2B:02	3
2B:03	3
2B:04	3
2B: 05	3
Total:	12
Average: (Total ÷ 4)	3.0

STANDARD 2C: SCHOOL CLIMATE

Overview

The Lutheran school is more than an assembly of people. It is a community of people, redeemed by God through Jesus Christ, in which all members are affirmed because of their forgiveness through Him. Christ's love motivates us to develop an atmosphere in which each member of the community may experience his or her individuality and contribute to the community. Members of this community recognize, value and respect the needs of others for acceptance, love, correction, approval and attention. All activities within the school, therefore, help to design, create and foster this climate.

Potential Evidence

Potential evidentiary documents provide support as the subcommittee determines the rating for each General Indicator of Success. The list includes suggestions for the documentation, but is not all-inclusive. The school reviews the list of potential evidence and determines those established at the school. Additional evidence that is not listed in the potential listing may also be presented. Evidence or lack thereof, assists the school in reaching an agreement on a rating. Potential evidence does not need to be included with the Self-Study, but is to be available for the Validation Team to review.

- [Parent handbooks](#)
- [Faculty handbook](#)
- [Bell Schedule](#) (daily, weekly, monthly schedules and/or calendars)
- Evidence of the spiritual nurturing of students such as chapel, large and small group activities
- [Schedule of school chapel services](#)
- [Teachers' classroom schedules](#)
- [Parent-school climate survey results](#)
- Appropriate Christian signage and messaging displayed throughout the school and classrooms
- [Parent newsletters](#)
- [Anti-bullying policies](#) (p. 27) and training

Potential Practices

Like potential evidence, potential practices are identified to demonstrate how well the school is meeting the indicators. A practice describes something that is being done at the school. It is often supported with written documentation, but it can be observed in classroom activities or daily routines. Schools are to identify the practices in place. A list of suggested practices is included in the Self-Study Report, but it is not all-inclusive. The identification of practices allows the subcommittee to arrive at a rating that reflects the condition currently in place at the school. It is the combination of evidence and practices that provide the support for an indicator rating.

- All types of school relationships emanate from the example of the teachings of Jesus Christ and demonstrate the proper understanding of Law and Gospel.
- Teachers' decision-making is centered on what is best for students.

- Regular school chapel services are intentionally designed to consciously and systematically strengthen the Christian faith of students and members of the school community.
- The school staff work cooperatively with area pastors and church workers to meet the spiritual needs of school families during times of celebration, times of crisis and day-to-day life events.
- Pastoral and school staff work cooperatively to meet the spiritual needs of school families.
- Home visits
- Parent/Teacher Conferences
- Student-led conferences

Required Responses

Narrative responses are to be written for all questions at the beginning of each Standard area and included in the Self-Study document. The answers to these questions provide a school with the opportunity to describe how it meets the needs of students. This also allows the school to indicate any nuances that are unique to the school's learning environment.

1. Describe the climate of the school and its impact on the lives of the students.

In order to promote a positive school climate, St. James Lutheran School instills academic, social, and behavioral goals for its students enabling them to strive for excellence as courteous and respectful children of God within relationships. Appropriate application of Law and Gospel is used when discipline is administered. The school's disciplinary plan brings administration, teachers, and parents into the situation where the issue can be dealt with in a loving, caring manner.

2. Describe ways that teachers support students and their families.

The teachers provide a caring environment that encourages students and their families to bring their concerns and needs to the staff. Whenever possible, the teachers attempt to assist families with their spiritual, emotional, financial, and educational needs. To assist a family in their needs, Kindergarten and First grade teachers have in school visits before the school year begins. This creates a wonderful foundation.

During the school year we pray as a staff during our morning devotions and weekly prayer needs created by the students go out to everyone through our school newsletter. Cards are sent when there is a serious illness or death of a family member. Staff members support a family by visiting members who are ill or attending a funeral when there is a death.

For those families with financial needs, we provide tuition assistance or extremely flexible payment plans.

PTL and other functions provide a way for families to be involved in the school. Occasionally guest speakers are brought in to provide families with information on important educational topics or to provide spiritual insights and encouragement.

When necessary, St. James Lutheran School refers a child to District #2687 (HL-W-W) for special education services. Through MAWSECO students and their parents can be assisted with special learning or speech needs.

3. Describe the ways that students relate to their teachers.

Students, teachers, and administrators respect each other as individual, fellow members of the body of Christ. When there are disagreements, a Law and Gospel approach is taken to reconcile the conflict. Respect for God, others, and self is taught and stressed in our interactions with each other. Students also worship together daily with daily devotions and chapel once a week.

4. How are the legal rights of parents, legal caregivers, teachers and students protected?

Permission slips for field trips are signed by parents/legal guardians. Parental/Legal guardian permission is obtained before student names and/or pictures appear on school promotions. Student records are accessible upon request by parent/legal guardian but such records are secured in the administrative office.

5. Describe how the school and church work together to meet the spiritual needs of students and their families.

The church and school work together as the body of Christ to meet the spiritual needs of the families of our school. Church doctrine is reinforced in the daily functions of the school and our school is an extension of the church. We focus on Word and Sacrament and Law and Gospel. The congregation provides spiritual support for the school and its students. Pastor Loder and the Vicar are available to speak to students if necessary in regards to personal counseling and matters of discipline.

6. List and describe the ways teachers and the school are intentional in establishing and maintaining positive relationships with school parents.

The school uses FastDirect, an online school information system to communicate with parents. A weekly newsletter is sent home and posted online. Some teachers send home classroom newsletters or communicate via FastDirect or texting. Teachers are available before and after school to meet with parents. We have parent/teacher conferences twice yearly, once in the Fall and again in the Spring. Our small class sizes allow for open parent/teacher communication. Parents are welcome to volunteer for various projects with classrooms such as art, life skills, and STEM.

7. How do the ways that school personnel relate to one another contribute to the school's climate?

St. James personnel relate and work well together to contribute to the school's positive climate. Staff Sessions are conducted once a month at which time communication and support are offered. Personal and family prayer requests are included in morning devotion time as well as a prayer partner for whom we pray on a daily basis. The administrator visits and observes each classroom and provides written or oral feedback. Staff members are willing to help out in areas where they feel they have the time, gifts, or expertise and they truly work together for the sake of Christ's Church.

8. Describe the school's discipline policy and its impact on school climate.

The foundation for behavior discipline at St. James school is upon God's good and gracious will found in the Ten Commandments. Summarized by the love of God and the love of others, the purpose of St. James is to provide nurture and correction in love and care for our students. By consistently applying the following rules and regulations, we strive to teach our students to deal with each other in a Christ-pleasing manner as taught through God's Word.

As a Lutheran school, we believe in the appropriate use of Law and Gospel. We prioritize maintaining a Christ-centered, safe, nurturing, and learning atmosphere. When students do not act appropriately, it detracts from other students' experiences and classroom focus. As such, the goal and purpose of discipline is to correct poor or sinful behavior and, once repentance takes place, assure the students of their forgiveness through Jesus Christ.

Required Evidence

Required Evidence must be attached to the Self-Study Report and used to assign a rating and complete the written comments for each General Indicator of Success. Place an "X" in the box and attach required documentation.

School discipline policy and procedures ([Family Handbook p. 23](#))

Required Indicator of Success

Required indicators must be answered "YES" and supported by evidence and comments for the school to be accredited in good standing. Place an "X" in the box and identify supporting evidence and practices.

2C:01* The climate of the school flows from and supports the school's purpose.

YES

NO

Identify and list supporting Evidence or Practices:

- [Family Handbook](#)
- [Teacher/Staff Handbook](#)
- [Office Referral](#)
- [Purpose Poster](#)

Comments:

St. James Lutheran School instills academic, social, and behavioral goals for its students enabling them to strive for excellence as courteous and respectful children of God within relationships. Appropriate

application of Law and Gospel is used when discipline is administered. The school's disciplinary plan brings administration, teachers, and parents into the situation where the issue can be dealt with in a loving, caring manner.

General Indicators of Success

General Indicators of Success help the school to quantify its compliance with the Required Standards. The assignment of a rating for each General Indicator of Success is determined by the evidence and the practices that support the rating. Each general indicator is to be rated by the subcommittee, using the criterion below with the corresponding point value. A written response is required for every indicator in the "Comments" section.

2C:02: The school's Christ-centered ethos is visible and evident to visitors.

Schools must demonstrate with documented evidence and practice that they comply with the following to function at the "operational" level. Place an "X" in the boxes below which currently apply to the school.

- Students demonstrate love for others in response to Christ's love for them.

- Teachers' care for student needs is prominently enacted throughout the school.

- Students worship together daily, either in each classroom or in a school-wide appropriate worship experience with other students.

- Classroom environment, hallway decorations and posted classroom projects demonstrate respect for teachers and peers.

- Student behavior is appropriate to encourage growth and to maintain the school's chosen teaching/learning environment.

Place an "X" in the Rating Box that Reflects the Actual Condition of the School

Highly Functional (4) Operational (3) Emerging (2) Not Evident (1)

Identify and list supporting Evidence or Practices:

- [Family Handbook](#)
- [Teacher/Staff Handbook](#)
- [Parent](#)
- [Teacher and Staff](#)

- [Students in Grade 1 - 3](#)
- [Students in Grade 4 - 8](#)
- Hallway Signage
- [Class Projects](#)
- [Fruit of the Spirit Award](#)

Comments:

Students worship together daily through classroom devotions and prayers. St. James students sit together as chapel families for weekly worship on Wednesday. The teachers provide a caring environment that encourages students and their families to bring their concerns and needs to the staff. Whenever possible, the teachers attempt to assist families with their spiritual, emotional, financial, and educational needs. The Christian ethic is proudly displayed throughout our school in: banners, pictures, paintings, and through children’s artwork. Our students show respect to their teachers and other staff members. At times when there are disagreements between teachers and students, a definite Law and Gospel approach is taken to reconcile the conflict. Respect for God, others, and self is taught and stressed in our interactions with each other.

2C:03: Teachers and staff members recognize, value and respect the needs of students.

Schools must demonstrate with documented evidence and practice that they comply with the following to function at the “operational” level. Place an “X” in the boxes below which currently apply to the school.

- Teachers demonstrate love for all students in Christ.
- Teachers attend to the individual needs of students.
- Teachers integrate faith principles throughout the day and pray with their students.
- Students are challenged to do their best.
- Students’ spiritual needs are given appropriate support by church and school.
- Law and Gospel are properly divided when discipline is administered.
- Staff demonstrates positive school spirit.

Through the school's discipline code, students are assisted to grow in self-control out of love for Christ.

When desirable and practical, students are given the opportunity to participate in making school decisions.

Place an "X" in the Rating Box that Reflects the Actual Condition of the School

Highly Functional (4)

Operational (3)

Emerging (2)

Not Evident (1)

Identify and list supporting Evidence or Practices:

- [Teacher/Staff Handbook](#)
- [Chapel Schedule](#)
- [Office Referral](#)
- [Grace Fridays \(Family Handbook p. 13\)](#)
- [Spirit Wear](#)

Comments:

Teachers show love and respect for their students as fellow members of the body of Christ. Due to low class sizes teachers are able to address students' individual needs and challenge them to achieve their highest potential. Teachers openly share their faith on a daily basis through words and actions in our class instruction and life lessons. Students are encouraged to speak to the pastor and their teachers if they have any questions or spiritual concerns. We are sinners and therefore need to model a balance between Law and Gospel when dealing with any disciplinary issues. The staff is also able to show support for the school by wearing a school t-shirt and other spirit wear. Self-control is modeled and practiced on a daily basis as we learn and grow together in Christ's love. Students have input on various activities throughout the year such as special dress up days and NLSW activities.

2C:04: School personnel model Christ's love in their relationships with parents and guardians.

Schools must demonstrate with documented evidence and practice that they comply with the following to function at the "operational" level. Place an "X" in the boxes below which currently apply to the school.

School personnel are approachable and receptive to parental questions or concerns.

Parents are viewed by teachers as school partners in the education process.

Staff members understand and relate appropriately with school families.

Parents and guardians are made to feel welcome at the school.

The school provides opportunities for parents to be involved at the school.

The legal rights of parents and legal guardians are protected.

Parents are encouraged to be positive and supportive of the school.

Place an "X" in the Rating Box that Reflects the Actual Condition of the School

Highly Functional (4)

Operational (3)

Emerging (2)

Not Evident (1)

Identify and list supporting Evidence or Practices:

- [Parent](#)
- [PTL Planning Calendar](#)
- [PTL Facebook Page](#)
- [Pastor Loder regularly encourages communication with parents](#)
- [Volunteers \(Family Handbook p. 7\)](#)
- [Parent Volunteer Email](#)
- [Photo Permission Waiver](#)

Comments:

Teachers are available before and after school to meet with parents. We have parent/teacher conferences twice yearly, once in the Fall and again in the Spring. Our class sizes allow for much open parent/teacher communication. Parents are able to stop in anytime and know their concerns will be addressed in a timely fashion. Parents have also been able to come into the classrooms and lead demonstrations and/or projects.

2C:05: Faculty and administration respect and support one another as individual, fellow members of the body of Christ.

Schools must demonstrate with documented evidence and practice that they comply with the following to function at the "operational" level. Place an "X" in the boxes below which currently apply to the school.

Faculty and administration gather for devotions regularly.

Faculty and administration speak positively about their co-workers at the school.

Faculty and administration demonstrate support of one another in tangible ways.

Place an "X" in the Rating Box that Reflects the Actual Condition of the School

Highly Functional (4)

Operational (3)

Emerging (2)

Not Evident (1)

Identify and list supporting Evidence or Practices:

- [Teacher/Staff Handbook \(p.8\)](#)
- Devotions held M, Th, F mornings by Pastor or Vicar
- Prayer for Student Body and Specific needs every Tuesday morning

Comments:

The faculty gathers every morning for a time of devotions except for chapel day on Wednesday. Personal and family prayer requests are included in morning devotion time. We also have a prayer partner for whom we pray on a daily basis. Staff members are willing to help out in areas where they feel they have the time, gifts, or expertise and they truly work together for the sake of Christ's Church modeling Matthew 18 when needed.

Pastor Loder provides a regular emphasis on how our relationships do well to be strong in Christian character. This does not mean that all will get along at all times or even have strong desires to be close. But it does emphasize the need to be loving and professional to one another.

Summary and Response Actions

Summary and response actions, related to the school's strengths and items needing improvement, are to be provided. Subcommittees carry on the primary work of evaluating the school's compliance with the assigned Standard through a thoughtful and purposeful evaluation of each of the General Indicators of Success. Based on any general indicator ratings of "1" or "2", the school must develop specific plans to improve. Plans must include specific targeted completion dates and assignments. At the discretion of the school, actions may be developed for indicators that have been rated as "3".

A. Are the Required Indicators of Success met for Standard 2C? (YES / NO)

Yes

B. Based on evidence, what are the strengths of the school related to Standard 2C?

As a Christ centered school, teacher and staff care for one another, students, and families above and beyond the basic needs of education.

- C. Based on evidence, what are the challenges of the school related to Standard 2C? All areas identified as “emerging” [2] or “not evident” [1] must be addressed in the School Action Plan.

There’s never a time relationships could not be better.

- D. What is the school’s average rating for all General Indicators of Success for Standard 2C, rounded to the nearest tenth?

STANDARD	RATING
2C:02	3
2C:03	3
2C:04	3
2C:05	3
Total:	12
Average: (Total ÷ 4)	3

- E. What is the school’s overall rating for all General Indicators of Success for Standard 2, rounded to the nearest tenth?

Section Totals (NOT Averages)	
STANDARD	RATING
2A	6
2B	12
2C	12
Total:	29
Average: (Total ÷ 10)	3.0

STANDARD 3: LEADERSHIP

The school is governed and administered effectively following written policy.

Note: Standard 3 is divided into two categories: governance and administration. Introductory comments and necessary responses are required for each of the two sections.

Note: Leadership of the school is a major factor in the successful development, implementation and evaluation of the school. Leadership is provided by a variety of groups and people. Two primary leadership components are the board or governing authority and the appointed administrator(s), although some schools may function effectively without a school board. Introductory comments and necessary responses are required for both sections.

Note: All schools have a “governing authority” regardless of the style and format of governance used in the school. As such, ALL schools are required to respond to Standard 3A: Governance and Standard 3B: Administration and respond to each indicator as it relates to the school’s governance model.

STANDARD 3A: GOVERNANCE

Overview

As the policy-making agency for the school, it is vital that the governing authority understands its role and function, operates efficiently and keeps accurate records. The governing authority empowers school leadership to maintain day-to-day autonomy and provide a high-quality, Christ-centered education for students.

Potential Evidence

Potential evidentiary documents provide support as the subcommittee determines the rating for each General Indicator of Success. The list includes suggestions for the documentation, but is not all-inclusive. The school reviews the list of potential evidence and determines those established at the school. Additional evidence that is not listed in the potential listing may also be presented. Evidence or lack thereof, assists the school in reaching an agreement on a rating. Potential evidence does not need to be included with the Self-Study, but is to be available for the Validation Team to review.

- Governing authority policy, procedures and practices
- Agendas and minutes from meetings
- NLSA School Improvement Plan

- Strategic plan
- Survey results regarding functions of the board or governing authority
- Anecdotal stakeholder input and feedback
- School handbook
- Teacher handbook
- Communications to stakeholders about policy decisions
- Governing body policies on roles and responsibilities, relationships, conflict of interest, etc.
- Three-year financial plan
- Policies and procedures related to financial aid
- Itemized school budget and auxiliary organization budgets
- Copy of grievance process
- Copy of most recent external audit or financial review

Potential Practices

Like potential evidence, potential practices are identified to demonstrate how well the school is meeting the indicators. A practice describes something that is being done at the school. It is often supported with written documentation, but it can be observed in classroom activities or daily routines. Schools are to identify the practices in place. A list of suggested practices is included in the Self-Study Report, but it is not all-inclusive. The identification of practices allows the subcommittee to arrive at a rating that reflects the condition currently in place at the school. It is the combination of evidence and practices that provide the support for an indicator rating.

- Examples of decisions aligned with the school's statement of purpose
- Policies and practices that clearly and directly support the school's purpose
- Board or governing authority's process for evaluating its decisions and actions
- Policies that delineate distinction between roles of board, administrator and pastor
- Board or governing authority retreats
- Board or governing authority training
- Leadership succession planning
- Example of a present grievance resolution

Required Responses

Narrative responses are to be written for all questions at the beginning of each Standard area and included in the Self-Study document. The answers to these questions provide a school with the opportunity to describe how it meets the needs of students. This also allows the school to indicate any nuances that are unique to the school's learning environment.

1. Describe the governing authority, indicating its membership, responsibilities and meeting times.

Description - The St. James Lutheran Church and School Board of Education is the governing authority assigned to assist the ministry staff in offering and managing an on-going Christ-centered religious education for members as well as for prospective members. The job of the St. James Lutheran School Board is to represent the association by insuring through policy that the school: (1) achieves appropriate results for appropriate persons at an appropriate cost - the ends set by the board, (2) avoids unacceptable actions and situations - the executive limitations set by the board, (3) governs itself well, and (4) appropriately relates to and monitors the administrator. The board's job through policy is to cast a bold and progressive vision that leads the organization in preparing and developing children to become capable Christian leaders in serving God and the world.

- Board of Christian Education Duties and Responsibilities Document
- St. James Lutheran Church and School Board of Elementary Education Policy Manual - Title: 3.1 Board Purpose and Job Description
- The By-laws of St. James Lutheran Church and School - Article XII

Membership - The board consists of up to seven (7) voting members of the congregation. A member must be a committed Christian, a member of St. James Lutheran Church, and be diligent in the use of the means of grace. This office has a four (4) year term. One member shall be elected as chairperson, one member as co-chairperson and these members will serve as Leadership Council Representatives. The principal and pastor are advisory members of the board.

- Board of Christian Education Duties and Responsibilities Document
- St. James Lutheran Church and School Board of Elementary Education Policy Manual - Title: 3.5 Officers of the Board
- The By-laws of St. James Lutheran Church and School - Article XII

Responsibilities - Board members have a responsibility to each other and the St. James Lutheran School association as a whole. The duties and responsibilities of the governing board include the following:

1. Make recommendations and be responsible for improving and keeping religious education activities in alignment with the congregation's mission by setting the vision and establishing goals and objectives and determining policies for the educational agencies within the board's scope.
2. Delegate management of daily operations to the administrator/director of each educational agency of the congregation.
3. Fill appointed positions.
4. Contract staff as needed and secure and approve hiring of school custodial staff.

5. Act as the Call Committee for the calling of teachers for St. James Lutheran School and extend the calls on behalf of the congregation.
6. Act as the Call Committee for the calling of the principal for St. James Lutheran School and extend the call on behalf of the congregation.
7. Make budgetary recommendations and monitor expenditures under the board's scope.
8. Make regular reports to the Leadership Council and the Voters' Assembly.
9. Maintain confidentiality in all matters.
 - St. James Lutheran Church and School Board of Elementary Education Policy Manual - Title: 3.3 Board Responsibilities
 - Board of Christian Education Duties and Responsibilities Document
 - The By-laws of St. James Lutheran Church and School - Article XII

Meeting times - The board will meet at least ten (10) times per year. To accomplish the work of the board, a regularly scheduled meeting time will be established.

- St. James Lutheran Church and School Board of Elementary Education Policy Manual - Title: 3.9 Board Meetings
- 3.9.1 The Board will meet on the third Monday of each month unless an alternative meeting time has been approved by majority vote.
- 3.9.2 Board meetings will begin at 7:00 P.M. and end at 9:00 P.M. unless a time extension is approved by a majority vote.

2. How are members of the governing authority and its officers selected?

- To be eligible for election to the governing board, a candidate must be a committed Christian, a member of St. James Lutheran Church, and be diligent in the use of the means of grace. This office has a four (4) year term. The right to elect officers and board members shall be vested in the Voters' Assembly. A nominating committee shall be formed as defined in Article V of the By-laws. The election for this shall take place at the annual Voters' meeting in January. In the event of a mid-term vacancy of an office, the Leadership Council shall appoint a member to fill the remainder of the term. Nominations for the officers of the board shall be made from the entire board in session as provided in the by-laws. The board will elect its own officers.
- Board of Christian Education Duties and Responsibilities Document - Qualifications
- St. James Lutheran Church Constitution - Article XI: Section 3. Right to Elect Officers and Board Members
- St. James Lutheran Church and School By-laws - Article V
- St. James Lutheran Church and School Board of Elementary Education Policy Manual - Title: 3.4 Board Member Code of Conduct
- St. James Lutheran Church and School Board of Elementary Education Policy Manual - Title: 3.5 Officers of the Board

3. Describe the process for regular evaluations of the lead administrator.

A yearly peer review is completed by the teachers/staff which is then given to and reviewed by the Board of Christian Education.

4. How are governing authority policies and minutes accessed for review?

The board or governing authority handbook or policy manual including policies relating to roles of board, administrator, and pastor may be obtained for observation in the St. James Lutheran Church and School Board of Elementary Education Policy Manual, the Teacher/Staff Handbook, the Family Handbook, and the St. James Lutheran Church and School Duties and Responsibilities documents. Agendas and minutes from meetings are also available.

5. How are the school's community and operating congregation(s) informed about the governing authority's policies, decisions and plans?

The school's community and operating congregation are informed about the governing board's policies, decisions, and plans in church newsletters, school newsletters, church bulletins, Leadership Council minutes, board meeting minutes, and voters' meeting minutes. The board reports to the Leadership Council and regular updates are given at the voters' meetings.

6. Describe actions that have been taken in the past three years by the board or governing authority for the benefit of students and their families.

Actions that have been taken in the past three years by the board for the benefit of students and their families include:

Implementation of Connected Families - which is aligned with the school's statement of purpose. Components currently utilized are: an Online Course, Teacher/Staff Workshops, Training, and Parent Connection Workshops.

Updated Family Handbook (8/25/22) - which contains policies and practices that clearly and directly support the school's purpose.

NLSA (National Lutheran School Accreditation) Teacher Survey 2023, Parent Survey 2023, and Lead Administrator Review 2023 - which serve as current anecdotal stakeholder input and feedback. The Lead Administrator survey is a review of service for the Lead Administrator based upon the duties and responsibilities outlined in the Lead Administrator Description adopted by the board, and this review is to be used as a tool for personal and professional growth.

Grades K through 4 are individual grade level classes. The combined 1st and 2nd grade classroom and the 3rd and 4th grade classroom have been split into individual grade level classes. Each classroom has a teacher with one grade level.

New math curriculum - BJU Press Math - This math program integrates biblical content to cultivate a Christian worldview.

In person learning - Following distance learning (Spring 2020), St. James Lutheran School returned to in person learning in the Fall of 2020.

7. Describe the process that is used for systematic and strategic planning.

Outside of a regular vision casting exercise by the Board of Christian Education and the administration, there currently is not a dedicated process that is used for systematic and strategic planning.

8. Describe the process for financial oversight of the school practiced by the governing authority.

At each monthly Board of Christian Education session the finances are reviewed and discussed as necessary. It is the responsibility of the administrator to ensure that the usage of finances fall within the budgeted allotment.

Required Evidence

Required Evidence must be attached to the Self-Study Report and used to assign a rating and complete the written comments for each General Indicator of Success. Place an "X" in the box and attach required documentation.

[Board or governing authority handbook](#) or policy manual including policies relating to roles of board, administrator and pastor

[Board Training Schedule/Agenda](#)

Required Indicators of Success

Required indicators must be answered "YES" and supported by evidence and comments for the school to be accredited in good standing. Place an "X" in the box and identify supporting evidence and practices.

3A:01* The operating organization designates the governing authority and has written policies clearly defining lines of authority, responsibilities and/or limitations of the governing authority.

YES

NO

Identify and list supporting Evidence or Practices:

- [The By-laws of St. James Lutheran Church and School - Article XII](#)
- [St. James Lutheran Church and School Board of Elementary Education Policy Manual](#)
- [Board of Christian Education Servant Description](#)

Comments:

Board members have a responsibility to each other and the St. James Lutheran School association as a whole.

3A:02* The operating organization has written policies clearly defining governing authority membership.

YES

NO

Identify and list supporting Evidence or Practices:

- [St. James Lutheran Church and School Board of Elementary Education Policy Manual - Title: 3.1 Board Purpose and Job Description](#)
- [St. James Lutheran Church and School Board of Elementary Education Policy Manual - Title: 3.3 Board Responsibilities](#)
- [Board of Christian Education Servant Description](#)
- [The By-laws of St. James Lutheran Church and School - Article XII](#)

Comments:

Board members are required to review and agree to follow the duties and responsibilities listed in the Board of Christian Education Servant Description.

3A:03* The governing authority establishes written policies or administrative limitation that empower the administration in operating the school.

YES

NO

Identify and list supporting Evidence or Practices:

- [St. James Lutheran Church and School Board of Elementary Education Policy Manual - Title: 3.1 Board Purpose and Job Description](#)

Comments:

The board will monitor and assess administrative performance against its Ends and Executive Limitations policies, informed by its Governance Process and Linkage policies, in order to fulfill its role in ensuring accountability for the performance of the organization.

General Indicators of Success

General Indicators of Success help the school to quantify its compliance with the Required Standards. The assignment of a rating for each General Indicator of Success is determined by the evidence and the practices that support the rating. Each general indicator is to be rated by the subcommittee, using the criterion below with the corresponding point value. A written response is required for every indicator in the “Comments” section.

3A:04 The governing authority is organized around written policy and understands and operates within its role and function.

Schools must demonstrate with documented evidence and practice that they comply with the following to function at the “operational” level. Place an “X” in the boxes below which currently apply to the school.

Note: Respond to each indicator as it relates to the school’s governance model.

- The governing authority provides for grievance and due process resolution procedures.
- The governing authority meets regularly and has clearly defined policies regarding open attendance at meetings and executive sessions.
- The governing authority has established process policies that set forth the style and rules by which the governing authority will complete its tasks and processes.
- Governance policies are determined at official meetings and recorded in the minutes, including appropriate updates and changes to policy.
- Minutes are recorded for each meeting and circulated to all members.
- Governing authority policies are collected into a policy manual, separate from the minutes.
- The governing authority makes appropriate reports to the operating organization(s).
- Neither the governing authority nor its individual members involve themselves in the day-to-day operations of the school.

Place an “X” in the Rating Box that Reflects the Actual Condition of the School

Highly Functional (4)

Operational (3)

Emerging (2)

Not Evident (1)

Identify and list supporting Evidence or Practices:

- [Family Handbook - Dispute Resolution Policy p. 8](#)
- [Teacher/Staff Handbook](#)
- [St. James Lutheran Church and School Board of Elementary Education Policy Manual - Title: 3.9 Board Meetings](#)
- [Family Handbook - Board of Elementary Education - Page 6](#)
- [St. James Lutheran Church and School Board of Elementary Education Policy Manual - Title: 3.1 Board Purpose and Job Description](#)
- [St. James Lutheran Church and School Board of Elementary Education Policy Manual - Title: 3.2 Board Governing Style](#)
- [St. James Lutheran Church and School Board of Elementary Education Policy Manual - Title: 3.3 Board Responsibilities](#)
- [St. James Lutheran Church and School Board of Elementary Education Policy Manual - Title: 3.4 Board Member Code of Conduct](#)
- [St. James Lutheran Church and School Board of Elementary Education Policy Manual - Title: 3.5 Officers of the Board](#)
- [St. James Lutheran Church and School Board of Elementary Education Policy Manual](#)
- [Reports to the Leadership Council](#)
- [St. James Lutheran Church and School Board of Elementary Education Policy Manual - Title: 3.2 Governing Style](#)
- [St. James Lutheran Church and School Board of Elementary Education Policy Manual - Title: 3.7 Board Committee Principles](#)
- [St. James Lutheran Church and School Board of Elementary Education Policy Manual - Title: 4.1 Board's Connection to School](#)
- [St. James Lutheran Church and School Board of Elementary Education Policy Manual - Title: 4.2 Accountability of the Administrator to the Board](#)
- [Board of Elementary Education Minutes](#)

Comments:

The Board of Elementary Education Policy Manual was adopted on August 16, 2015, and is followed at St. James Lutheran Church and School. The Constitution of St. James Lutheran Church and the By-laws of St. James Lutheran Church and School were adopted 3/26/2017; the Teacher/Staff Handbook was revised July 2019; and the Family Handbook was updated on August 25, 2022.

3A:05: Governing authority policy supports effective personnel.

Schools must demonstrate with documented evidence and practice that they comply with the following to function at the “operational” level. Place an “X” in the boxes below which currently apply to the school.

Note: Respond to each indicator as it relates to the school’s governance model.

- Written policy delineates roles and responsibilities of the board or governing authority.
- Comprehensive job responsibilities and/or limitations are in place for the administrator.
- The governing authority or the administrator’s direct supervisor evaluates the head administrator annually based on the job description.
- The governing authority receives reports from the administrator or the administrator’s direct supervisor at each meeting.
- The governing authority has written policies or position descriptions clearly delineating relationships between the head administrator and pastor(s).

Place an “X” in the Rating Box that Reflects the Actual Condition of the School

- Highly Functional (4) Operational (3) Emerging (2) Not Evident (1)
-

Identify and list supporting Evidence or Practices:

- [St. James Lutheran Church and School Board of Elementary Education Policy Manual - Title: 3.1 Board Purpose and Job Description](#)
- [St. James Lutheran Church and School Board of Elementary Education Policy Manual - Title: 3.3 Board Responsibilities](#)
- [Board of Christian Education Servant Description](#)
- [The By-laws of St. James Lutheran Church and School - Article XII](#)
- [St. James Lutheran Church and School Board of Elementary Education Policy Manual - Category: 2 Executive Limitations](#)
- [Board of Christian Education - Principal/Lead Administrator Servant Description](#)
- [St. James Lutheran Church and School Board of Elementary Education Policy Manual - Title: 4.4 Monitoring Administrator Performance](#)
- [Board of Elementary Education Lead Administrator Review - June, 2023](#)

- Anecdotal stakeholder input and feedback
- [Principal/Lead Administrator Report](#)
- [Teacher/Staff Handbook - Pastors; Principal/Lead Administrator](#)

Comments:

The Lead Administrator is the chief administrative officer of the school and is charged with the responsibility for the operation of the school. This leader is directly responsible to and shall operate the school according to the By-laws, Policies and Procedures, and philosophy formulated by the Board of Elementary Education. A review of service for the lead administrator, based upon the duties and responsibilities outlined in the Lead Administrator Description adopted by the Board of Elementary Education, was completed in June, 2023. This review is to be used as a tool for personal and professional growth.

3A:06: Governing authority members meet prescribed qualifications and are trained regarding roles and responsibilities.

Schools must demonstrate with documented evidence and practice that they comply with the following to function at the “operational” level. Place an “X” in the boxes below which currently apply to the school.

Note: Respond to each indicator as it relates to the school’s governance model.

- Written policies define qualifications for board or governing authority members.

- Governing authority members are required to participate in professional development regarding roles and responsibilities of the governing body and its individual members.

Place an “X” in the Rating Box that Reflects the Actual Condition of the School

- Highly Functional (4)**
 Operational (3)
 Emerging (2)
 Not Evident (1)
-

Identify and list supporting Evidence or Practices:

- [The By-laws of St. James Lutheran Church and School - Article XII](#)
- [St. James Lutheran Church and School Board of Elementary Education Policy Manual](#)
- [Board of Christian Education Duties and Responsibilities Document - Qualifications](#)
- [St. James Lutheran Church and School Board of Elementary Education Policy Manual - Title: 3.8 Board Education](#)
- [Pastor Loder: SLED Certified](#)
- [Leadership Development](#)

Comments:

An evaluation for the Lead Administrator has been developed and is completed by staff members each spring. In addition, the School Board has sent members to a joint Church and School committee that has surveyed stakeholders and has held meetings working through a procedure to develop a long-range plan jointly. In 2020, the Lead Administrator led the School Board through a Vision Casting seminar which produced action points moving forward. This seminar will happen each year in the fall in order to review current action points as well as to provide time for further discussion. Then, in 2022, the Lead Administrator led the School Board through a Vision Casting seminar which produced action points moving forward, as in 2020.

3A:07: The governing authority establishes and employs systematic planning for school improvement.

Schools must demonstrate with documented evidence and practice that they comply with the following to function at the “operational” level. Place an “X” in the boxes below which currently apply to the school.

Note: Respond to each indicator as it relates to the school’s governance model.

The governing authority has a process in place for evaluating the effectiveness of the school that includes a needs-assessment process integral to school-wide systematic planning.

Long-range goals or desired outcomes are developed from the planning process.

Place an “X” in the Rating Box that Reflects the Actual Condition of the School

Highly Functional (4) **Operational (3)** **Emerging (2)** **Not Evident (1)**

Identify and list supporting Evidence or Practices:

- [School Action Plan](#)
- [St. James Church and School Strategic Planning](#)
- [Vision Casting](#)
- Anecdotal stakeholder input and feedback

Comments:

The School Board has sent members to a joint Church and School committee that has surveyed stakeholders and has held meetings working through a procedure to develop a long-range plan jointly. In 2020, the Lead Administrator led the School Board through a Vision Casting seminar which produced action points moving forward. This seminar will happen each year in the fall in order to review current action points as well as to provide time for further discussion. Then, in 2022, the Lead Administrator led the School Board through a Vision Casting seminar which produced action points moving forward, as in 2020.

3A:08: The governing authority provides strong financial leadership for the school.

Schools must demonstrate with documented evidence and practice that they comply with the following to function at the “operational” level. Place an “X” in the boxes below which currently apply to the school.

Note: Respond to each indicator as it relates to the school’s governance model.

- The board or governing authority establishes policies that provide for sound budget planning and fiscal operations.
- The board or governing authority approves the budget (including annual tuition and fees) for the school or has developed policies to empower individuals with that responsibility.
- The board or governing authority accepts, reviews and devises strategies to react to concerns expressed in an annual external financial review or financial audit.

Place an “X” in the Rating Box that Reflects the Actual Condition of the School

- Highly Functional (4)** **Operational (3)** **Emerging (2)** **Not Evident (1)**
-

Identify and list supporting Evidence or Practices:

- [St. James Lutheran Church and School Board of Elementary Education Policy Manual - Title: 3.6 Agenda Planning](#)
- [St. James Lutheran Church and School Board of Elementary Education Policy Manual - Title: 2.5 Limitation on Financial Planning and Budgeting](#)
- [Reports to the Leadership Council](#)
- [Board of Christian Education Duties and Responsibilities Document](#)

Comments:

The Board of Christian Education makes budgetary recommendations and monitors expenditures under the board’s scope. In addition, the board makes regular reports to the Leadership Council and the Voters’ Assembly.

Summary and Response Actions

Summary and response actions, related to the school's strengths and items needing improvement, are to be provided. Subcommittees carry on the primary work of evaluating the school's compliance with the assigned Standard through a thoughtful and purposeful evaluation of each of the General Indicators of Success. Based on any general indicator ratings of "1" or "2", the school must develop specific plans to improve. Plans must include specific targeted completion dates and assignments. At the discretion of the school, actions may be developed for indicators that have been rated as "3".

A. Are the Required Indicators of Success met for Standard 3A? (YES / NO)

Yes

B. Based on evidence, what are the strengths of the school related to Standard 3A?

The governing board has written policies clearly defining lines of authority, responsibilities/or limitations of the governing authority, and membership. In addition, the board has established written policies or administrative limitations that empower the administration in operating the school. The board also understands and operates within its role and function, supports effective personnel, meets prescribed qualifications, and has established systematic planning for school improvement.

C. Based on evidence, what are the challenges of the school related to Standard 3A? All areas identified as "emerging" [2] or "not evident" [1] must be addressed in the School Action Plan.

The governing authority has provided strong financial leadership for the school, however, an external review or audit is needed to improve this component. An annual external financial review or financial audit needs to take place to assist the governing board in: addressing any budgetary concerns, making budgetary recommendations, and monitoring expenditures.

D. What is the school's average rating for all General Indicators of Success for Standard 3A, rounded to the nearest tenth?

STANDARD	RATING
3A:04	3
3A:05	3
3A:06	3
3A:07	3
3A:08	2
Total:	14
Average: (Total ÷ 5)	2.8

STANDARD 3B: ADMINISTRATION

Overview

Quality Lutheran schools function at a high level, in large part, because of exceptional leadership performance. Schools thrive when administrators are equipped and empowered to lead with vision. Successful Lutheran administrators continually strive to accomplish the school's purpose with students and families. The administrator leads the team to meet or exceed the organization's expected outcomes.

An effective school leader must possess exceptional abilities in data analysis, staff motivation and public communication. An effective school leader must assure that marketing and public relations are effectively accomplished. Above all else, a clear commitment to sharing the Gospel message and maintaining a proper respect of the calling is paramount.

Potential Evidence

Potential evidentiary documents provide support as the subcommittee determines the rating for each General Indicator of Success. The list includes suggestions for the documentation, but is not all-inclusive. The school reviews the list of potential evidence and determines those established at the school. Additional evidence that is not listed in the potential listing may also be presented. Evidence or lack thereof, assists the school in reaching an agreement on a rating. Potential evidence does not need to be included with the Self-Study, but is to be available for the Validation Team to review.

- Job-specific criteria
- Meeting agendas and minutes
- Supervision and evaluation documents
- School-wide professional development plans and schedules
- Representative supervision and evaluation reports
- Minutes of meetings with stakeholders
- Survey responses
- Innovations or changes in methodology that positively impacted student learning
- Innovations or changes in methodology that positively enhanced ministry opportunities
- Copies of auxiliary organizations' budgets, where applicable
- Copy of the three-year financial plan with enrollment projections and associated rationale

Potential Practices

Like potential evidence, potential practices are identified to demonstrate how well the school is meeting the indicators. A practice describes something that is being done at the school. It is often supported with written documentation, but it can be observed in classroom activities or daily routines. Schools are to identify the practices in place. A list of suggested practices is included in the Self-Study Report, but it is not all-inclusive. The identification of practices allows the subcommittee to arrive at a rating that reflects the condition

currently in place at the school. It is the combination of evidence and practices that provide the support for an indicator rating.

- The school administrator demonstrates a desire through actions for appropriate professional credentials and continuing professional growth (e.g. membership in professional organizations, books and periodicals read, workshops attended, coaching and/or mentoring relationships).
- The teacher supervision program is aligned with staff development activities and results in enhanced student learning.
- The school administrator is actively engaged in the life of the sponsoring congregation(s).
- The school administrator is actively engaged in preparing and administering the school budget.
- The administrator relates appropriately with students, families and teachers.

Required Responses

Narrative responses are to be written for all questions at the beginning of each Standard area and included in the Self-Study document. The answers to these questions provide a school with the opportunity to describe how it meets the needs of students. This also allows the school to indicate any nuances that are unique to the school's learning environment.

1. Describe how the daily activities of the school are administered.

The school day starts in God's Word being shared together in staff devotions. Supervision is provided for the early arriving students. Breakfast is available for all students. Grades K-8 start at 8:10 A.M. and dismiss at 2:45 P.M. Preschool classes are five days a week and are offered in the mornings. The three-year-old students attend three days per week (M, W, F), and the four-year-old students attend five days per week. Teachers and support staff are responsible for the daily activities of their respective classrooms based on their teaching assignments. Classes in Grades K-4 are self-contained, and classes in Grades 5-8 are departmentalized. The teaching staff includes: Preschool - Amanda Holz/Stacey Sparkman; Kindergarten - Angi Chabot; Grade 1 - Heidi Olsen; Grade 2 - Pam Halverson; Grade 3 - Luke Dahl; Grade 4 - Chelsea Wagner; Grades 5-6 - Lisa Kotila; Grades 7-8 - Greg Baumann; Music/Band/Science - Molly Loder; Music - Nancy Butterfass; and Religion - Pastor Loder/Vicar.

2. Describe the qualifications that are required for the school administrator(s).

The qualifications that are required for the school administrator include:

1. Be faithful in the use of the means of grace through regular attendance to worship.
2. Must be a member of St. James.
3. Be mindful of the importance of humility, reverence, and joy in service of the Lord and His Church.

3. What are the ways the school administration uses leadership skills in the congregation, community and professional organizations?

Congregation - The Pastor serves as the Leader of the Church through Word and Sacrament and also as the Lead Administrator of the school. He attends and participates in the Board of Education and Leadership Council meetings, as well as occasionally attending and participating in

the Region II Administrator's Group. He routinely contributes to mass communications and articles.

Community - The Lead Administrator makes connections in the community with Community Meals, Faith in Blue, and various other opportunities and needs within the community.

4. Describe how the administrator is involved with the fiscal management of the school.

The Lead Administrator attends the School Board and Leadership Council meetings where the budget is discussed. He helps review the budget, formulate the new budget for each year, and also shares responsibility for fiscal adherence to the approved budget.

5. List and describe ways the administrator is engaged in the church and involved in the educational activities of the whole congregation.

The Lead Administrator is the Pastor who is the primary teacher - Sunday Morning Bible Study and preaching, Staff Bible Study, devotions, and Religion classes.

6. Describe the ways the administrator publicly demonstrates his or her saving faith in Jesus Christ.

The Lead Administrator publicly demonstrates his saving faith in Jesus Christ in the way in which he handles the staff, students, teaching, discipline issues, personal issues, etc. and grounds these things in God's Word, approaching them in a pastoral way.

7. Share examples of collaboration and shared leadership modeled by the administrator.

Examples of collaboration and shared leadership modeled by the administrator include: a liaison list which facilitates a close working relationship between the staff and also his collaboration with an administrative team. In addition, the Lead Administrator works with faculty members who have responsibilities in the areas of accreditation, with in-service presentations, recruitment, athletics, fundraisers, and NLSW.

8. Describe how the administrator leads by example with personal and professional development.

The Lead Administrator leads by example with personal and professional development by pursuing training in further education, such as SLED, Advanced Education Certificate in Servant Leadership, etc. He is regularly seeking educational opportunities, meeting with educators, and frequently communicating with the St. James teachers. This leader has implemented the Connected Families Program for the staff and parents. He is also exploring the possibility of pursuing a master's degree in education.

9. Describe the process of instructional supervision in place at the school as it relates to professional development and student learning.

Intentional professional development is utilized. Formal and/or informal classroom and teacher observations are completed. After each formal observation, a written evaluation is prepared by the Lead Administrator, and an evaluation conference between Lead Administrator and teacher is held.

10. Describe the ways that the administrator is present and relates appropriately with students, families and staff.

The Lead Administrator is present regularly in the school building. He has frequent interactions with students, families, and staff in teaching Religion classes, handling behavioral issues, leading in-services, devotions, Chapel, and attending extra-curricular activities where parents are present.

11. How is the school's administrator(s) engaged in the district with required conferences and workshops?

The Lead Administrator is the Vice President for the District, on the Board of Directors for the District, and attends conferences/workshops as required. If he is unable to attend the Region II meetings, he reviews the minutes of the meetings.

Required Evidence

Required Evidence must be attached to the Self-Study Report and used to assign a rating and complete the written comments for each General Indicator of Success. Place an "X" in the box and attach required documentation.

[Administrator's job description](#)

Required Indicator of Success

Required indicators must be answered "YES" and supported by evidence and comments for the school to be accredited in good standing. Place an "X" in the box and identify supporting evidence and practices.

3B:01* The administrator demonstrates a personal Christian faith, a commitment to Lutheran education and a dedication to the teaching ministry of the governing authority.

YES

NO

Identify and list supporting Evidence or Practices:

- [The By-laws of St. James Lutheran Church and School - Article XII](#)
- [St. James Lutheran Church and School Board of Elementary Education Policy Manual](#)
- [Board of Christian Education Duties and Responsibilities Document](#)
- [Board of Elders - Senior Pastor - Duties and Responsibilities Document](#)

Comments:

Pastor Loder (Pastor/Lead Administrator) leads Church and Chapel services at St. James Lutheran Church and School. He leads staff devotions, teaches Religion classes, and leads Bible Study at St. James Lutheran Church and School. He baptizes, confirms, and maintains adherence to the Missouri Synod Lutheran Church doctrine.

General Indicators of Success

General Indicators of Success help the school to quantify its compliance with the Required Standards. The assignment of a rating for each General Indicator of Success is determined by the evidence and the practices that support the rating. Each general indicator is to be rated by the subcommittee, using the criterion below with the corresponding point value. A written response is required for every indicator in the “Comments” section.

See Page 8 of the Self-Study for Rating Rubric.

3B:02: The administrator meets qualifications required for the position.

Schools must demonstrate with documented evidence and practice that they comply with the following to function at the “operational” level. Place an “X” in the boxes below which currently apply to the school.

- [The principal is a member of The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod, Rostered or eligible for Roster status.](#)
- [The administrator holds active membership in the congregation supporting the school and is regular in Church attendance and Bible study.](#)
- The administrator holds current, appropriate state certification or is actively working toward obtaining required certification.
- The administrator has a master’s degree in education, with no fewer than 12 semester hours in administration or supervision or is actively working toward such a degree. (The administrator of an early childhood center has a bachelor’s degree, with no fewer than 18 semester hours in early childhood education, or is actively working toward accomplishing this requirement.)

Place an “X” in the Rating Box that Reflects the Actual Condition of the School

Highly Functional (4) Operational (3) Emerging (2) Not Evident (1)

Identify and list supporting Evidence or Practices:

- Lead Administrator - [Ordination Certificate, Certificate of Vocation, Advanced Education Certificate in Servant Leadership, SLED Training](#)
- Administrative Team - In addition to the Lead Administrator, the administrative team also includes two teachers. (One of these teachers has a master’s degree in education.)
- There is an additional teacher on the staff with a master’s degree in education and is also a licensed reading specialist.

Comments:

The Pastor serves as the Leader of the Church through Word and Sacrament and also as the Lead Administrator of the school. He is a member of The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod, Rostered, and SLED trained. In addition to the Lead Administrator, the administrative team at St. James Lutheran School also includes two teachers who provide support in a number of areas such as: technology, clerical responsibilities, etc. One of these teachers has a master's degree in education. There is an additional teacher on the staff with a master's degree in education and is also a licensed reading specialist.

3B:03: The administrator is provided adequate support to complete required tasks.

Schools must demonstrate with documented evidence and practice that they comply with the following to function at the "operational" level. Place an "X" in the boxes below which currently apply to the school.

- Release time is provided for administrative duties for the school's primary administrator.

- The school administrator is released from teaching duties for at least one-fourth of each day for every 50 students enrolled. (If administrative duties are shared, then release time may be shared.)

- Secretarial assistance is available for school purposes for at least one-fourth of each school day for every 50 students enrolled.

- In a school with more than 200 students, an individual is designated as assistant administrator with associated administrative duties.

Place an "X" in the Rating Box that Reflects the Actual Condition of the School

- Highly Functional (4) Operational (3) Emerging (2) Not Evident (1)
-

Identify and list supporting Evidence or Practices:

- [Lead Administrator Schedule 2023-2024](#)
- [Secretary Schedule 2023-2024](#)

Comments:

The Lead Administrator is present regularly in the school building - approximately 25 hours per week. He spends one third of his time at school in teaching and two thirds of his time at school in administrative duties. A school secretary provides administrative support daily.

3B:04: The administrator is an effective communicator.

Schools must demonstrate with documented evidence and practice that they comply with the following to function at the “operational” level. Place an “X” in the boxes below which currently apply to the school.

- The administrator communicates frequently and regularly with pastor(s) and teachers individually and collectively.
- The administrator communicates effectively and frequently with families and students of all ages.
- A wide variety of venues both personal (one-to-one) and public are regularly used to facilitate effective communication.
- The administrator regularly spends a significant percentage of time listening, observing and speaking with parents, students and teachers.
- The administrator compiles such policies, procedures or practices as appropriate for effective communication to the various school communities into student and/or parent handbooks/manuals.

Place an “X” in the Rating Box that Reflects the Actual Condition of the School

- Highly Functional (4)** **Operational (3)** **Emerging (2)** **Not Evident (1)**
-

Identify and list supporting Evidence or Practices:

- [Monthly Staff Sessions](#)
- [Peek at Next Week Emails](#)
- [Periodical Messages to School Families](#)
- [School Newsletter](#)
- Emails, texts, phone calls
- Office visits
- [Family Handbook](#)

Comments:

The Lead Administrator, Pastor Loder, communicates through FastDirect, Google, Google Calendar, phone calls, social media, texts, and traditional mail to communicate with families, students, and staff. He has built relationships with local police, the area Community Meals organization, and the public school administrators.

3B:05: The administrator is engaged in the process of developing and managing the budget.

Schools must demonstrate with documented evidence and practice that they comply with the following to function at the “operational” level. Place an “X” in the boxes below which currently apply to the school.

- The administrator is involved in developing and managing the budget, including expenditures.
- The administrator has overall responsibility to assure that the budget is managed responsibly, using generally accepted bookkeeping procedures and safeguards.
- The administrator provides leadership in securing funds and resources, which may include individual, private, corporate, and/or governmental sources.
- Funds provided by auxiliary organizations are allocated per governing board policy, in consultation with the school administrator and regularly audited.

Place an “X” in the Rating Box that Reflects the Actual Condition of the School

Highly Functional (4) **Operational (3)** **Emerging (2)** **Not Evident (1)**

Identify and list supporting Evidence or Practices:

- [St. James Lutheran Church and School Board of Elementary Education Policy Manual - Title: 3.6 Agenda Planning](#)
- [St. James Lutheran Church and School Board of Elementary Education Policy Manual - Title: 2.5 Limitation on Financial Planning and Budgeting](#)
- [St. James Lutheran Church and School Board of Elementary Education Policy Manual - Title: 2.6 Financial Condition and Activities](#)
- [St. James Lutheran Church and School Board of Elementary Education Policy Manual - Title: 2.11 End Focus and Limitations in Grants and Contracts](#)
- [St. James Lutheran Church and School Board of Elementary Education Policy Manual - Title: 2.14 Third Source Funding](#)
- [Reports to the Leadership Council](#)
- [Board of Christian Education Duties and Responsibilities Document](#)

Comments:

The Lead Administrator attends the School Board and Leadership Council meetings where the budget is discussed. He helps review the budget, formulate the new budget for each year, and also shares responsibility for fiscal adherence to the approved budget.

3B:06: The administrator is committed to personal development and the development of staff members.

Schools must demonstrate with documented evidence and practice that they comply with the following to function at the “operational” level. Place an “X” in the boxes below which currently apply to the school.

- The administrator provides spiritual leadership for the school community and in the congregation(s) through word and example.
- The administrator is a member of professional organizations.
- The administrator provides leadership in curriculum development, staff development, congregational service, public relations, student evaluation and other school-related activities.
- Levels of responsibility and accountability are clearly defined. The administrator provides leadership for implementation of current educational technology, including necessary staff development and training.
- The administrator engages in an ongoing program of professional staff supervision.

Place an “X” in the Rating Box that Reflects the Actual Condition of the School

- Highly Functional (4)** **Operational (3)** **Emerging (2)** **Not Evident (1)**

Identify and list supporting Evidence or Practices:

- [The By-laws of St. James Lutheran Church and School - Article XII](#)
- [St. James Lutheran Church and School Board of Elementary Education Policy Manual](#)
- [Board of Christian Education Duties and Responsibilities Document](#)
- [Board of Elders - Senior Pastor - Duties and Responsibilities Document](#)
- [Staff meeting agenda](#)
- [In-service agenda](#)
- Professional Development Self-Assessment ([Beginning](#), [Middle](#), [End](#))
- [Classroom/Teacher Observation Documentation](#)
- [Peer Observation Documentation](#)
- Survey responses - [The Lead Administrator Review](#), Parent Survey, Teacher Survey, Student Survey
- Self-contained classrooms - Kindergarten through Grade 4
- [New Math Curriculum, Fall 2023 - BJU Math](#)
- [New Science Curriculum - Abeka](#)
- [St. James Church and School Strategic Planning](#)

Comments:

Pastor Loder serves as the Leader of the Church through Word and Sacrament and also as the Lead Administrator of the school. He leads Church and Chapel services at St. James Lutheran Church and School. He leads staff devotions, teaches Religion classes for students, and leads Bible Study at St. James Lutheran Church and School. He baptizes, confirms, and maintains adherence to the Missouri Synod Lutheran Church doctrine. His professional organizations include LEA and MINNDEPENDENT. This leader has implemented the Connected Families Program for the staff and parents. In addition, he has regularly scheduled staff meetings, conducts in-services, adds current educational technology and curriculum as needed, utilizes a professional development self-assessment for teachers during the school year, and also completes formal and informal classroom and teacher observations to improve instruction and staff development.

Summary and Response Actions

Summary and response actions, related to the school's strengths and items needing improvement, are to be provided. Subcommittees carry on the primary work of evaluating the school's compliance with the assigned Standard through a thoughtful and purposeful evaluation of each of the General Indicators of Success. Based on any general indicator ratings of "1" or "2", the school must develop specific plans to improve. Plans must include specific targeted completion dates and assignments. At the discretion of the school, actions may be developed for indicators that have been rated as "3".

A. Are the Required Indicators of Success met for Standard 3B? (YES / NO)

Yes

B. Based on evidence, what are the strengths of the school related to Standard 3B?

Pastor Loder serves as the Leader of the Church through Word and Sacrament and also as the Lead Administrator of the school. He publicly demonstrates his saving faith in Jesus Christ in the way in which he handles the staff, students, teaching, discipline issues, personal issues, etc. and grounds these things in God's Word, approaching them in a pastoral way.

C. Based on evidence, what are the challenges of the school related to Standard 3B? All areas identified as "emerging" [2] or "not evident" [1] must be addressed in the School Action Plan.

The Lead Administrator does not have a master's degree in education, with no fewer than 12 semester hours in administration or supervision, however, his administrative team has a member with a master's degree in education. There is an additional teacher on the staff with a master's degree in education and is also a licensed reading specialist. In addition, he is planning to contact NLSA to clarify his present standing with his role as the Leader of the Church, in combination with his doctoral studies, and this Indicator of Success for Standard 3B.

- D. What is the school's average rating for all General Indicators of Success for Standard 3B, rounded to the nearest tenth?

STANDARD	RATING
3B:02	2
3B:03	3
3B:04	3
3B:05	3
3B:06	3
Total:	14
Average: (Total ÷ 5)	2.8

- E. What is the school's overall rating for all General Indicators of Success for Standard 3, rounded to the nearest tenth?

Section Totals (NOT Averages)	
STANDARD	RATING
3A	14
3B	14
Total:	28
Average: (Total ÷ 10)	2.8

STANDARD 4: PROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL

A qualified and competent staff serves the school.

Overview

Maintaining a qualified and competent staff is an essential quality related to an accredited Lutheran school. The performance of the instructional, administrative and auxiliary personnel, functioning as a unit, should reflect the stated philosophy and objectives of the school.

Potential Evidence

Potential evidentiary documents provide support as the subcommittee determines the rating for each General Indicator of Success. The list includes suggestions for the documentation, but is not all-inclusive. The school reviews the list of potential evidence and determines those established at the school. Additional evidence that is not listed in the potential listing may also be presented. Evidence or lack thereof, assists the school in reaching an agreement on a rating. Potential evidence does not need to be included with the Self-Study, but is to be available for the Validation Team to review.

- Faculty handbook
- Job descriptions for all non-administrative school positions
- Teacher portfolios
- Professional personnel files related to teacher qualifications and competency
- List of teachers' professional organization memberships
- Policy and procedures for preparing volunteers
- Policies related to support staff
- Current salary and benefit scale
- Qualification and training of school volunteers
- New teacher induction guidelines
- Survey results

Potential Practices

Like potential evidence, potential practices are identified to demonstrate how well the school is meeting the indicators. A practice describes something that is being done at the school. It is often supported with written documentation, but it can be observed in classroom activities or daily routines. Schools are to identify the practices in place. A list of suggested practices is included in the Self-Study Report, but it is not all-inclusive. The identification of practices allows the subcommittee to arrive at a rating that reflects the condition currently in place at the school. It is the combination of evidence and practices that provide the support for an indicator rating.

- Peer-to-peer observations
- Teacher visits and observations in other schools
- Participation in accreditation work
- Effective vetting, preparation and support for new teachers
- Teacher home visits

Required Responses

Narrative responses are to be written for all questions at the beginning of each Standard area and included in the Self-Study document. The answers to these questions provide a school with the opportunity to describe how it meets the needs of students. This also allows the school to indicate any nuances that are unique to the school's learning environment.

1. State the educational requirements and/or credentials for professional personnel.

Full time teachers are required to hold a current state of MN teaching license. We expect all of our teachers to use their God-given talents in every area of their ministry. Six full time St. James teachers are synodically trained.

2. What is the current student-teacher ratio?

St. James School currently has 109 students PK-8th grade. We have 5 full time teachers, a preschool teacher, 1 individual doing clerical work and teaching music half day, and 1 part-time teacher, and then 3 part-time teacher aides. Pastor and Vicar teach all Religion classes. Core teacher to student ratio is 17 but with the part-time and support staff adult to student ratio is between 7 to 21.

3. Describe the staff development process in place to help teachers learn and grow professionally.

St. James analyzes and then focuses on different areas in which to grow and improve instructional practice by adhering to the Minnesota Licensing Certification process. The principal and the staff work together and follow a list of areas to focus on relevant to school needs that still fall within Minnesota Department of Education licensing. The appropriate amount of Continuing Education Units (CEUs) are obtained to ensure continuing licensing. An additional focus of growth is staying current in classroom instruction and still providing the best quality of Christian education. Examples of our practices at St. James are as follows:

- Improving the knowledge of teachers and principals in one or more of the core academic subjects. This includes 2017 Fall attendance at PACER workshop, Classflow instruction seminar, Mayer Lutheran High School Region II best practices in service, and Suicide Awareness training. This leads to effective instructional teaching strategies, methods, and skills based on scientifically-based research.
- Training in effectively integrating technology into curricula and instruction.
- St. James holds student case study meetings with MAWSECO staff to identify and help facilitate services for students with learning disabilities, ultimately ending in Individual Education Plans.
- Training in methods for improving student behavior, identifying early and appropriate interventions, and involving parents more effectively in their children's education. Example of this practice is full implementation of FastDirect the student grading and communication program.
- Leadership development and management training.
- Training in the use of STAR testing data and other assessments to improve instruction and student outcomes.

4. Describe the content and frequency of staff meetings and evaluate their effectiveness.

All staff members meet 4 days a week for morning devotions. Staff sessions are held each month, beginning with devotions. Pastor, vicar and other support staff attend when possible. At the beginning of the school year, the staff reviews the calendar for the year, professional development days, home visits and curriculum implementation. At the end of the school year the staff reviews the school year and discusses ways to improve the next school year. All meetings are opened with a devotion and end with a prayer.

5. Describe ways in which teachers demonstrate their personal relationship with Jesus Christ and their dedication to the Lutheran teaching profession.

St. James teachers demonstrate their personal relationship with Jesus Christ in daily devotions, staff devotions four days a week, and in chapel services each Wednesday. During chapel services the staff is praying with and for students, staff, and faculty. They pray with the students throughout the day including before snack/lunch time, and model a personal relationship with Jesus Christ in all they do within the school and community. St. James faculty also shows their dedication to Lutheran Education by attending the LCMS teacher convention each year in Mankato, MN. Each teacher also demonstrates his/her own faith by being an active member of an LCMS congregation.

6. Describe the entire induction process, including background checks for staff members.

St. James Lutheran Church and School has a rededication/installation service each year in September for the faculty. The hiring process begin with the school board president and/ or school administrator collecting information on potential candidates using the following methods in no specific order. Notices are posted in the congregation's newsletters for the job opening. Information is collected on potential called candidates from CMIF through the MN South District office. The Concordia University Systems are also used to find potential candidates. These

candidates are narrowed down by the administrator and school board, and then the interview process begins. The interview process is conducted by the school administrator, and board members. References are checked prior to the hiring decision. The school board will make final decisions on which candidate to hire. As of 2016 background checks are conducted using the background service "Protect My Ministry."

7. Describe the ways teachers and staff members are equipped in current instructional technology.

- Every teacher has been provided with a classroom computer and/or use of a Chromebook.
- The staff has completed Promethean board training.
- The staff has also completed Classflow training.
- A Promethean board with an overhead projector is made available for each classroom.
- The staff and students have access to Chromebooks and classroom tablets which are used for literacy development, doing research, and typing reports/projects.

8. How are non-Rostered teachers informed of the teachings and doctrine of the Lutheran Church -Missouri Synod?

Non-rostered teachers would work through an education process with Pastor Loder that would inform and equip them with the doctrine of the LCMS.

Required Evidence

Required Evidence must be attached to the Self-Study Report and used to assign a rating and complete the written comments for each General Indicator of Success. Place an "X" in the box and attach required documentation.

- [School's staff development plan](#)
- [Non-discriminatory salary and benefit scale or policy \(Method of Operation\)](#)
- [MinistrySafe Training \(or comparable program\) for all school employees, coaches, sponsors \(encouraged to have all volunteers also trained\)](#)

Required Indicator of Success

Required indicators must be answered "YES" and supported by evidence and comments for the school to be accredited in good standing. Place an "X" in the box and identify supporting evidence and practices.

4:01* All school personnel express and demonstrate agreement with the stated school purpose.

- YES
- NO

Identify and list supporting Evidence or Practices:

- [Teacher/Staff Covenant](#)
- [Parent Surveys](#)
- [Student Surveys Grades 1 - 3](#)
- [Student Surveys Grades 4 - 8](#)

Comments:

All teachers are committed to equipping and empowering families and students through Christ through their dedication to providing quality education, fair discipline and redirection of behavior matters, encouraging reconciliation, and fostering positive relationships with families who have entrusted their children to their care.

General Indicators of Success

General Indicators of Success help the school to quantify its compliance with the Required Standards. The assignment of a rating for each General Indicator of Success is determined by the evidence and the practices that support the rating. Each general indicator is to be rated by the subcommittee, using the criterion below with the corresponding point value. A written response is required for every indicator in the “Comments” section.

4:02: Christ-centered teachers have qualities and qualifications necessary for success in their defined areas of service.

Schools must demonstrate with documented evidence and practice that they comply with the following to function at the “operational” level. Place an “X” in the boxes below which currently apply to the school.

- All teachers demonstrate a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and a dedication to teaching in the Lutheran school.
- Full-time faculty members are on the Roster of the LCMS, eligible to be on the Roster of the LCMS or have completed or are actively enrolled in the Colloquy or Seminar Program through the Concordia University Education Network (CUEnet).
- Teachers have been prepared and vetted following prescribed federal and state mandates for background checks and training.
- Full-time professional staff members have appropriate teaching certificate(s) from the state and meet requirements for their specific assignments.

Place an "X" in the Rating Box that Reflects the Actual Condition of the School

<input type="checkbox"/>	Highly Functional (4)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Operational (3)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Emerging (2)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not Evident (1)
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Identify and list supporting Evidence or Practices:

- [Student Surveys Grades 1 - 3](#)
- [Student Surveys Grades 4 - 8](#)
- [Parent Surveys](#)
- [Roster Status](#)
- [Background Checks](#)
- [Teaching Licenses](#)
- [Childcare License](#)
- [Training Record](#)

Comments:

Teachers/Staff attend Sunday worship as well as daily staff devotions and school chapel. Prayers and devotions are held in the classrooms daily before meals and throughout the day. All teachers/staff are mindful of their required certifications.

4:03: Teachers are informed of, and subsequently evaluated and supported in the continuing pursuit of professional growth and development.

Schools must demonstrate with documented evidence and practice that they comply with the following to function at the "operational" level. Place an "X" in the boxes below which currently apply to the school.

- Programs for teacher supervision/evaluation/growth have been adopted and are implemented by the administrator.
- Teachers engage in professional development, including spiritual development and are accountable for implementation that supports student learning.
- Teachers attend workshops, conferences, seminars and training appropriate to their position and discipline.
- LCMS Rostered teachers are provided opportunities to attend LCMS events.
- Teachers hold membership in professional organizations.
- The school provides opportunity, training and support so that teachers may effectively and appropriately engage technology in classroom instruction.

Place an "X" in the Rating Box that Reflects the Actual Condition of the School

Highly Functional (4)

Operational (3)

Emerging (2)

Not Evident (1)

Identify and list supporting Evidence or Practices:

- [Personal Professional Development](#)
- [Formal Observation](#)
- [Peer Observation](#)
- [Teacher/Staff Handbook](#)
- Conferences

Comments:

Personal Professional Development forms are filled out three times a year which are reviewed by the administrator who also provides feedback. Two formal observations are conducted by the administrator during the year as well. All teachers are required to do two peer observations per year. When available, teachers/staff attend district conferences and are encouraged to seek out and attend other professional development opportunities throughout the year. Occasional training is handled in house for advancement of technology understanding and use.

4:04: Teachers and support staff are empowered and equipped to effectively accomplish their assigned task.

Schools must demonstrate with documented evidence and practice that they comply with the following to function at the "operational" level. Place an "X" in the boxes below which currently apply to the school.

New teachers receive thorough orientation and are supported with experienced, assigned teaching mentors.

Teachers demonstrate and continuously improve knowledge and skills necessary for effective instruction and modeling of Christ-centered values.

Policies related to teachers and support staff are established and practiced.

The average student-professional personnel ratio is appropriate for the age and level of the students and ensures optimal student growth.

The number of staff members is adequate to provide effective instruction and supervision for students at all school activities.

The nondiscriminatory salary and benefit scale is adopted and implemented for all personnel.

Place an "X" in the Rating Box that Reflects the Actual Condition of the School

Highly Functional (4) Operational (3) Emerging (2) Not Evident (1)

Identify and list supporting Evidence or Practices:

- [Teacher/Staff Handbook](#)
- [Salary Guidelines](#)

Comments:

St. James' small staff allows new teachers to create relationships with current teachers which allows the needed support to gain confidence in the school's policies, routines, and structure. New teachers attend orientation meetings before school begins to go over school policies, routines, and schedules. New teachers are assisted by the school secretary with proper forms, paperwork, background checks, and teacher/staff handbook. The number of staff is adequate to provide effective instruction and supervision for students at all school activities. Volunteers are used as well if needed. St. James follows the salary guidelines that are recommended by the MN South District of the LCMS.

4:05: Employees and volunteers serving in support roles have the qualifications and training necessary for success in their defined area of service.

Schools must demonstrate with documented evidence and practice that they comply with the following to function at the "operational" level. Place an "X" in the boxes below which currently apply to the school.

Support staff (e.g., teacher assistants, student teachers, nurse) meets state requirements for their specific assignments.

Appropriate policies related to support staff are established and practiced.

Adequate training for support staff is provided.

Appropriate policies and training for volunteers are in place.

Staff members understand and relate appropriately with students and their families.

Place an "X" in the Rating Box that Reflects the Actual Condition of the School

Highly Functional (4)

Operational (3)

Emerging (2)

Not Evident (1)

Identify and list supporting Evidence or Practices:

- [Teacher/Staff Handbook](#)
- [Volunteer Handbook](#)

Comments:

Background checks are completed on all volunteers through “Protect My Ministry.” Individual training of classroom volunteers is conducted by the classroom teachers or administrator based on the needs of the services the volunteer will provide. All staff who have interactions with students and families relate well to them and represent the purpose of St. James School.

Summary and Response Actions

Summary and response actions, related to the school’s strengths and items needing improvement, are to be provided. Subcommittees carry on the primary work of evaluating the school’s compliance with the assigned Standard through a thoughtful and purposeful evaluation of each of the General Indicators of Success. Based on any general indicator ratings of “1” or “2”, the school must develop specific plans to improve. Plans must include specific targeted completion dates and assignments. At the discretion of the school, actions may be developed for indicators that have been rated as “3”.

A. Are the Required Indicators of Success met for Standard 4? (YES / NO)

Yes

B. Based on evidence, what are the strengths of the school related to Standard 4?

St. James teachers/staff are grounded in their Christian faith and are regularly seeking opportunity for professional growth and development.

C. Based on evidence, what are the challenges of the school related to Standard 4? All areas identified as “emerging” [2] or “not evident” [1] must be addressed in the School Action Plan.

Teachers/staff do not currently hold memberships in professional organizations.

D. What is the school’s average rating for all General Indicators of Success for Standard 4, rounded to the nearest tenth?

STANDARD	RATING
4:02	2
4:03	2
4:04	3
4:05	3
Total:	10

Average: (Total ÷ 4)	2.5
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STANDARD 5: TEACHING AND LEARNING

*The school's curriculum documentation guide
and ensure teacher effectiveness and student learning.*

Overview

Curriculum is the central guide for Lutheran educators as to what is essential for teaching and learning. A Lutheran school of excellence prioritizes the continuous development of its instructional program and the documentation that guides that program. In each grade level and each course, curriculum documentation should reflect the sequence of steps that provides a plan for instruction.

Potential Evidence

Potential evidentiary documents provide support as the subcommittee determines the rating for each General Indicator of Success. The list includes suggestions for the documentation, but is not all-inclusive. The school reviews the list of potential evidence and determines those established at the school. Additional evidence that is not listed in the potential listing may also be presented. Evidence or lack thereof, assists the school in reaching an agreement on a rating. Potential evidence does not need to be included with the Self-Study, but is to be available for the Validation Team to review.

- Descriptions and schedules of mentoring, coaching, and induction programs
- Examples of classroom learning expectations and standards of performance
- Examples of assessments that promoted modification of instruction
- Examples of cross-curricular projects and interdisciplinary instruction
- Peer coaching guidelines and procedures
- Supervision and evaluation procedures
- Curriculum maps
- Curriculum scope and sequence
- Administrative classroom observation protocols and logs
- Examples of improvements to instructional practices resulting from the evaluation process
- Teacher evaluation criteria
- Student work demonstrating the application of knowledge
- Interdisciplinary projects
- Authentic assessments
- Agenda items addressing strategies
- Report cards
- Curriculum writing process

- Lesson plans aligned to curriculum
- Graduate follow-up surveys
- Ethical-use policy for use of technology, equipment, and software
- Inventory list of instructional hardware and equipment used by both teachers and students
- List of classroom and library reference materials
- The school’s short-range and long-range technology plans, including the review schedule and procedures for review of the plans

Potential Practices

Like potential evidence, potential practices are identified to demonstrate how well the school is meeting the indicators. A practice describes something that is being done at the school. It is often supported with written documentation, but it can be observed in classroom activities or daily routines. Schools are to identify the practices in place. A list of suggested practices is included in the Self-Study Report, but it is not all-inclusive. The identification of practices allows the subcommittee to arrive at a rating that reflects the condition currently in place at the school. It is the combination of evidence and practices that provide the support for an indicator rating.

- Examples of teachers using technology as an instructional resource
- Examples of student use of technology as a learning tool
- Peer or mentoring opportunities and interactions
- Recognition of teachers regarding instructional practice
- Examples of improvement to content and instructional practice resulting from collaboration
- Student-led conferences
- Analysis of test score data

Required Responses

Narrative responses are to be written for all questions at the beginning of each Standard area and included in the Self-Study document. The answers to these questions provide a school with the opportunity to describe how it meets the needs of students. This also allows the school to indicate any nuances that are unique to the school’s learning environment.

1. Indicate resources used in the construction of the curriculum.

St. James uses CurriculumTrak as the tool to construct and compare curriculum.

2. Describe the integration of the Lutheran faith in the curriculum.

The instruction at St. James Lutheran School is being aligned with the Minnesota Academic Standards and adapts to meet the needs of our students providing a place of excellence for students and our families. In addition to fulfilling academic needs, we are also fulfilling the mission of our churches by keeping our curriculum Christ Centered primarily using Concordia Publishing House material.

3. Describe the curriculum changes implemented in the school during the past three years and the impact of these changes related to student learning.

St. James has a curriculum review cycle to ensure the use of the best curriculum that fits the overall purpose and philosophy of the school. Biblically oriented science and math curricula have recently been introduced at St. James. Minnesota State standards are used as a guide but there is a desire to push beyond the state requirements and adjust where the requirements may not align with St. James' purpose and philosophy. Promethean boards, chromebooks, and chrome based tablets have had a significant impact on the learning process. These tools have enabled students to find information quickly and determine what to do with information.

4. Describe the predominant teaching methods most often used by teachers in the classrooms.

St. James teachers use a variety of teaching methods in order to best reach the needs of the students while considering the content including: direct, indirect, group discussions, independent, experiment, multimedia, and small group instruction.

5. Describe how teachers communicate and collaborate to ensure continuity and student success.

St. James teachers/staff meet daily for a brief time of devotions and collaboration each morning. In addition, a monthly staff session is held for an in-depth review of teacher and student needs and work to improve our collaborative efforts. Through daily dialogue between teachers during lunch hours and throughout the day, teachers are considering the needs of our students.

6. How does the school accommodate students with unique differences and learning potential?

St. James Lutheran School teachers accommodate the needs of our students and their families by meeting with parents to discuss academic challenges and each individual's unique way of learning. St. James employs a para staff that is guided by teachers to individualize and accommodate the individual student's learning. St. James has a partnership HLWW school district that provides speech therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, and certified SPED teachers. Accommodations are being made for individual students with differentiated learning by St. James staff through these partnerships. Part of the reality of accommodations, however, is that St. James cannot provide for all needs of some students, at which time families are highly encouraged to consider school options that would best serve their students.

7. Describe the process of recording and reporting learner progress to parents or guardians.

Newsletters, grades, and many varieties of personal communication; i.e. FastDirect, e-mails (Google educational G-suite), phone-calls, text messages, morning and after school interaction. Formal Parent-Teacher Conferences are held twice a year. Report cards are sent home four times throughout the school year, after each quarter.

8. Describe the instructional materials, other than textbooks, that are used regularly by teachers and students.

Teachers use a variety of instructional materials and resources beyond the given textbook. The list below highlights those most frequently used:

- The Bible and Luther's Small Catechism
- ChromeBooks
- Chrome-based tablets
- Laptops
- SMART boards
- Content driven websites: Khan Academy, Scratch Kids, Scratch Jr., Youtube, Promethean Planet, Scholastic, Starfall, ABCMouse, ABCya, Bible Gateway, BrainPop Jr., Classics for Kids
- Hands-on manipulatives in all STEAM areas (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math): i.e. science equipment, art supplies, geoboards, flash cards, etc.
- Collection of reading materials at various reading levels and interests
- Hymnals, Printed music, musical instruments, etc.

9. How are students provided with access to resource materials that enhance learning?

St. James Lutheran School has portable chromebooks for fourth through eighth graders, first through third graders have tablets, and all classrooms have access to SMART boards. St. James has a volunteer library staff that holds weekly library sessions for preschool through eighth grade. All teachers have access to storage space and classrooms are equipped with resources for hands-on learning and experiments.

10. How do teachers use instructional materials to communicate the Christian faith?

All teachers at St. James Lutheran School believe that communicating their Christian faith is not limited only to chapel services and daily devotions, each uses every opportunity to integrate God's word and our faith in all areas of instruction. Concepts are taught from our Christian faith perspectives and how that is different from how the world views those concepts. The choices of historical figures and even fictional characters are filtered through God's commandments and plans for our lives. A life-long walk with Christ is inspired by musical selection for chapel, church choir programs, and school events. Students in Preschool-eighth grade are instructed by the teacher and the Pastor and/or Vicar on a scheduled weekly basis.

11. Describe how students who struggle academically are supported.

This question was answered in questions 6 above: St. James Lutheran School teachers accommodate the needs of our students and their families by meeting with parents to discuss academic challenges and each individual's unique way of learning. St. James employs a para staff that is guided by teachers to individualize and accommodate the individual student's learning. St. James has a partnership HLWW school district that provides speech therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, and certified SPED teachers. Accommodations are being made for individual students with differentiated learning by St. James staff through these partnerships.

Required Evidence

Required Evidence must be attached to the Self-Study Report and used to assign a rating and complete the written comments for each General Indicator of Success. Place an "X" in the box and attach required documentation.

- Curriculum documentation** is developed and implemented for every grade level for religion, mathematics, science, reading, language arts, social studies, world languages, art, music, physical education and any other subject taught. (Early childhood centers need not segment learner outcomes into specific subject areas.)
- A **current schedule** is prepared for each classroom or teacher, indicating clearly when subjects (activities) or classes are taught and during what periods.
- Provide a chart** illustrating the semester/yearly instructional minutes of all content offered, percentage of each school week allocated to each subject (activity), at each level, including a comparison with state guidelines (If your state does not have minute requirements, provide all other information and note there are no state requirements).
- Analysis of the results of standardized tests** administered for each grade level (required for grades 3 and above) **for the past three years**, including a description of how this information is used to evaluate and improve student learning, is provided.

Required Indicators of Success

Required indicators must be answered "YES" and supported by evidence and comments for the school to be accredited in good standing. Place an "X" in the box and identify supporting evidence and practices.

5:01* The teaching of the Christian faith is recognized as the major purpose of the school, is allotted appropriate time in the daily schedule and is integrated intentionally throughout the curriculum and instruction.

YES

NO

Identify and list supporting Evidence or Practices:

- [We discipline using Law and Gospel.](#)
- [We have religion three days a week.](#)
- We have chapel once a week.
- We pray throughout the day.
- We resolve conflict using Matthew 18.

Comments:

Equipping and empowering families and students through Christ is founded on biblical truths that guide all that St. James puts forth for the sake of providing a quality education. The truths that make St. James different from other schools is that the care of the soul is a priority over and above academic excellence. Through regular assessment of our students, teachers are able to evaluate and adjust educational approach and tools as necessary for the most impactful education.

5:02* Curriculum documentation is developed and provided for religion, mathematics, science, reading, language arts, social studies, world languages, art, music, physical education and any other subject taught by the school. (Early childhood centers need not segment learning outcomes into specific subject areas.)

YES

NO

Identify and list supporting Evidence or Practices:

- Math, social studies, science, art, music, language arts, and physical education are attached to Minnesota Common Core standards.
- The ordained Pastor of St. James, Vicar, and commissioned teachers adhere to synodical doctrine in the teaching of religion to students. Pastor guides as overall spiritual leader of the school.
- [CurriculumTrak](#) is used for compilation and sharing

Comments:

Each teacher is responsible for the cataloging and tracking of their class curriculum.

General Indicators of Success

General Indicators of Success help the school to quantify its compliance with the Required Standards. The assignment of a rating for each General Indicator of Success is determined by the evidence and the practices that support the rating. Each general indicator is to be rated by the subcommittee, using the criterion below with the corresponding point value. A written response is required for every indicator in the “Comments” section.

5:03: The school community builds and maintains a vision, direction and focus for student learning.

Schools must demonstrate with documented evidence and practice that they comply with the following to function at the “operational” level. Place an “X” in the boxes below which currently apply to the school.

- The school prepares students for the next level of education and life.

- The school aligns its goals, curriculum and measures to those of the next level so that students transition successfully.

- The school quantifies, [tracks and publicly celebrates student success](#).

- School leaders monitor and support the improvement of instructional practices used by teachers to ensure student success.

Place an “X” in the Rating Box that Reflects the Actual Condition of the School

- Highly Functional (4)** **Operational (3)** **Emerging (2)** **Not Evident (1)**
-

Identify and list supporting Evidence or Practices:

- [Purpose Statement](#)
- [Family Handbook \(Philosophy\)](#)
- [Yearly Theme and In-Service Training](#)
- [STARS Testing](#)
- [Honor Roll](#)
- [Personal Professional Development](#)
- [Observations](#)

Comments:

Staff’s instructional design follows Minnesota State standards. Through 3 STAR testing probes assessment and teacher observation and analysis grade advancement is determined. Culminating advancement ceremonies occur at preschool, kindergarten, and eighth grade in the form of a graduation. An honor roll for grades 5-8 is published publicly each quarter. The school board and principal through consultation with teaching staff identify instructional staff improvement opportunities.

5:04: The school’s Christ-centered, curriculum provides challenging learning experiences and ensures that students have sufficient opportunities to develop life skills, critical thinking skills and applied learning.

Schools must demonstrate with documented evidence and practice that they comply with the following to function at the “operational” level. Place an “X” in the boxes below which currently apply to the school.

- The curriculum is aligned with delineated standards.

- The curriculum is documented, assessed, monitored and challenges all students.

- The curriculum reflects research, best practices and high standards in education and it is designed to ensure that every student receives Christ-centered, rigorous and sequential academic preparation.

- The curriculum is aligned with LCMS teachings.

- The curriculum ensures that students can pursue their God-given talents and passions.

- The curriculum is used as an opportunity to proclaim the Gospel.

Place an “X” in the Rating Box that Reflects the Actual Condition of the School

- Highly Functional (4)** **Operational (3)** **Emerging (2)** **Not Evident (1)**

Identify and list supporting Evidence or Practices:

- [CurriculumTrak](#)
- [Minnesota State Standards](#) (Benchmark Column in CurriculumTrak)
- [Lesson Plans](#)
- [LCMS Standards](#)

Comments:

Curriculum is tied to Minnesota State Standards. Documentation from results of STAR testing ensures progress and exposes needs for improvement and differentiated instruction. Results of assessment tests further show student growth and/or determine support services as needed for individual students. As needed a committee is formed to assess curriculum and recommend accordingly. High school placement shows students are achieving appropriately. St. James staff lesson plans are aligned to Minnesota State standards. Pastor, Vicar, and teachers are involved in academic and spiritual development by bringing Christ into all content areas. Pastor, Vicar, and teachers teach religion and check and counsel students about appropriate literature and internet resources.

5:05: Teachers use instructional strategies that engage students and ensure mastery of learning expectations.

Schools must demonstrate with documented evidence and practice that they comply with the following to function at the "operational" level. Place an "X" in the boxes below which currently apply to the school.

- Teachers implement classroom instructional strategies that provide students with the knowledge, creativity, skills and understanding to become problem solvers, decision makers and responsible Christian citizens.
- Classroom instruction involves teaching strategies and settings that address diverse student needs and accommodate individual learning styles as fully as possible.
- Evidence of active student engagement exists in every classroom.
- Service learning is a component of the school's required program.

Place an "X" in the Rating Box that Reflects the Actual Condition of the School

- Highly Functional (4) Operational (3) Emerging (2) Not Evident (1)
-

Identify and list supporting Evidence or Practices:

- [Connected Families Framework](#)
- [Supplemental Education Resources/Differentiated Instruction](#)
- [Observations](#)
- Service Projects

Comments:

Small and large group projects, individual projects, outside community help projects such as making gifts for members at the nursing home, chapel family activities, singing at the care center, problem solving lessons, hands on manipulatives in math, “I teach, we do, you do” model. Differentiated instruction in core areas. Quarterly honor roll and year end academic awards ceremony for student engagement. Seventh and eighth grade recycling project. K-8 leads a Christmas worship service in the St. James church. Lent and advent services are held jointly between St. James church and school. Fifth through eighth grade student volunteers follow an acolyte and ushering schedule for chapel and all worship services. Thank you notes to volunteers and contributors are made by staff and students together. International, national, and local offerings come from student chapel offerings.

5:06: Teachers intentionally communicate and collaborate to improve instruction and student learning.

Schools must demonstrate with documented evidence and practice that they comply with the following to function at the “operational” level. Place an “X” in the boxes below which currently apply to the school.

- Teachers regularly participate in staff development activities designed to provide professional growth, improve instruction and enhance student learning.
- Teachers pursue opportunities to interact with colleagues seeking ways to improve.
- Teachers work together to share responsibility for student learning.
- Teachers regularly share content, resources, instructional techniques and management skills.
- School leaders empower teachers with time and resources that facilitate opportunities for communication and collaboration.

Place an “X” in the Rating Box that Reflects the Actual Condition of the School

- Highly Functional (4)** **Operational (3)** **Emerging (2)** **Not Evident (1)**
-

Identify and list supporting Evidence or Practices:

- [Personal Professional Development](#)
- [Formal and Informal Observations](#)
- [Staff Session Collaboration](#)

Comments:

St. James has continued over the years to participate in professional development opportunities including: PACER symposium, Classflow seminar, Fast Direct webinars, suicide prevention workshop, bloodborne pathogen updates, and individual student service medical plans. Following daily devotions, important events and activities are shared with staff in attendance. Internal emails are used for correspondence. Teaching staff lesson plan design includes correlation to state standards shared with colleagues and principal collaboration occurs on an as needed basis. Teacher to teacher interaction is flexible due to our schedule design. This allows for relevant educational discussions to occur on an as needed basis. Teachers share and implement projects and lessons together.

To stay in compliance with Minnesota teaching standards, each teacher seeks continuing education units described by the Minnesota Department of Education to keep updated and current teaching licenses.

There is time allotted for everyone to share during meetings. Continued communication about individual student needs and classroom developments. Continuous intentional communication with student's parents is present due to the fact that many parents are in the habit of picking up their children after school. This allows for teacher to parent direct communication. Newsletters (individual teachers and school wide), text messaging, School Messenger, Fast Direct, church and school Facebook site, church and school website, and email.

5:07: Technology enhances and enriches the students' learning environment.

Schools must demonstrate with documented evidence and practice that they comply with the following to function at the "operational" level. Place an "X" in the boxes below which currently apply to the school.

- Faculty members are users, instructors and participants in the process of engaging technology with the learning process in schools.
- Faculty members acquire the necessary technology skills to use personally and integrate and guide student learning.
- Clear and intentional planning and protocols for technology are in place.
- Technology enhances curriculum, instruction, assessment and is used by teachers to personalize, enhance and improve instruction.
- Student technology is monitored and filtered to promote appropriate integration of technology into the learning process.

Place an "X" in the Rating Box that Reflects the Actual Condition of the School

Highly Functional (4) Operational (3) Emerging (2) Not Evident (1)

Identify and list supporting Evidence or Practices:

- Smart Boards
- Chromebooks
- Tablets
- [Go Guardian](#)
- [Technology Policy](#)

Comments:

Technology is used to enhance learning in a balanced manner for each student. 4th - 8th grade students are each assigned a Chromebook while 2nd - 3rd grades use tablets. All devices are monitored by administration and teachers using GoGuardian.

5:08: Curriculum, instruction and assessment are regularly monitored and adjusted through the collection and analysis of data-driven information.

Schools must demonstrate with documented evidence and practice that they comply with the following to function at the "operational" level. Place an "X" in the boxes below which currently apply to the school.

- The school monitors, reviews, evaluates and modifies its curriculum based on the use of school-wide student data that is generated by multiple tools and surveys.
- Multiple forms of student assessment drive instructional strategies.
- Student learning is monitored, tracked, recorded and reported regularly and continuously during the time the student is enrolled at the school.
- A comprehensive program that examines student achievement with frequent progress monitoring is used to personalize instruction for student success.

Place an "X" in the Rating Box that Reflects the Actual Condition of the School

Highly Functional (4) Operational (3) Emerging (2) Not Evident (1)

Identify and list supporting Evidence or Practices:

- [STARS Testing](#)
- [Student Surveys - Grades 1 - 3](#)
- [Student Surveys - Grades 4 - 8](#)
- Oral Assessment
- Unit Tests
- [Report Cards](#)

Comments:

STARS test, oral assessment, and regular unit test data provides emerging and obtained skills by the students. The teacher will then take the data and design targeted lesson plans, taking into consideration their own knowledge of the students, the scope and sequence of the curriculum, instructional resources (St. James support staff) and the data provided.

Summary and Response Actions

Summary and response actions, related to the school’s strengths and items needing improvement, are to be provided. Subcommittees carry on the primary work of evaluating the school’s compliance with the assigned Standard through a thoughtful and purposeful evaluation of each of the General Indicators of Success. Based on any general indicator ratings of “1” or “2”, the school must develop specific plans to improve. Plans must include specific targeted completion dates and assignments. At the discretion of the school, actions may be developed for indicators that have been rated as “3”.

A. Are the Required Indicators of Success met for Standard 5? (YES / NO)

Yes

B. Based on evidence, what are the strengths of the school related to Standard 5?

St. James is blessed to offer a Christ-centered environment for families and students that offers quality academics.

C. Based on evidence, what are the challenges of the school related to Standard 5? All areas identified as “emerging” [2] or “not evident” [1] must be addressed in the School Action Plan.

St. James has a need to better serve students by strengthening assessment strategies, and using the information to provide better instruction. Teachers will continue to grow spiritually and professionally in order to better our school.

D. What is the school’s average rating for all General Indicators of Success for Standard 5, rounded to the nearest tenth?

STANDARD	RATING
5:03	3
5:04	3
5:05	3

5:06	3
5:07	3
5:08	2
Total:	17
Average: (Total ÷ 6)	2.8

STANDARD 6: STUDENT SERVICES

Student services and activities are offered to meet the needs and foster the growth of each student in a safe and healthy environment.

Overview

Lutheran schools provide student services that support and enrich the educational experience of each student. Some of these services in this Standard are required by state or federal mandate. The school may choose to provide others to promote the training of the whole child. It is important that these programs are run efficiently and enhance the overall image of the school in its community.

Potential Evidence

Potential evidentiary documents provide support as the subcommittee determines the rating for each General Indicator of Success. The list includes suggestions for the documentation, but is not all-inclusive. The school reviews the list of potential evidence and determines those established at the school. Additional evidence that is not listed in the potential listing may also be presented. Evidence or lack thereof, assists the school in reaching an agreement on a rating. Potential evidence does not need to be included with the Self-Study, but is to be available for the Validation Team to review.

- [Policies related to student admissions](#) (p.8)
- Admissions counselor position
- Policies related to student matriculation
- [Policy for preparing volunteers](#)
- [Athletic handbook](#)
- Samples of student cumulative records
- List of counselors to whom the school refers students and families
- Evidence of background checks and MinistrySafe (or comparable program) training for staff and volunteers
- [List of first-aid materials](#) (one in each classroom)
- Wellness plan
- [Volunteer handbook](#)
- Admissions counselor position
- Enrollment Handbook
- Registration Handbook

Potential Practices

Like potential evidence, potential practices are identified to demonstrate how well the school is meeting the indicators. A practice describes something that is being done at the school. It is often supported with written documentation, but it can be observed in classroom activities or daily routines. Schools are to identify the practices in place. A list of suggested practices is included in the Self-Study Report, but it is not all-inclusive. The identification of practices allows the subcommittee to arrive at a rating that reflects the condition currently in place at the school. It is the combination of evidence and practices that provide the support for an indicator rating.

- Student admission process
- Procedures for administering medication
- Policies or procedures related to student matriculation
- Teachers or supervisory personnel's active involvement in recess supervision
- Annual training for coaches and school volunteers
- Daily cleaning and sanitizing schedules for areas where food is served or consumed
- Safety precautions when working with special materials, tools and equipment
- Procedures surrounding student involvement in co-curricular and extra-curricular activities and service.

Required Responses

Narrative responses are to be written for all questions at the beginning of each Standard area and included in the Self-Study document. The answers to these questions provide a school with the opportunity to describe how it meets the needs of students. This also allows the school to indicate any nuances that are unique to the school's learning environment.

1. Describe the school's admission procedures for students.

Parents who are interested in enrolling their child(ren) fill out a registration form, an emergency care form, and a picture release form. Also see the Family Handbook for age requirements and non-discrimination policy.

2. Describe the counseling services available to students and their parents.

Our Lead Administrator, Pastor Loder, is willing and available to students and parents as needed. The counselor from Howard Lake Waverly Winsted is available for referrals.

3. What orientation strategies are used to ensure a successful transition between home and school at the entrance of each new student?

Families have access to both a digital and paper version of the Family Handbook. Tours, and a meeting with the teacher if desired, are arranged to fit the prospective families schedule. Back to School Night provides a time for parents and children to meet other families, move their supplies into their desks, or lockers, chat with teachers and staff to have any questions answered. There is

also a special session during Back to School Night for new families where information is shared about school policies.

4. What strategies are in place to ensure a satisfactory transition to the next level of education for students?

The STARS test is administered 3 times a year (fall, winter, and spring) in grades 1-8 which gives teachers a snapshot of each student's progress in math and reading. Kindergarten students take a STARS reading assessment in the spring. Teachers use the test results and normal course work assessments and assignments to ascertain each student's strengths and weaknesses and provide challenges or extra help when needed.

5. List and describe all extracurricular activities sponsored by the school.

When there are enough students in grades five through eight, we have girls volleyball in the fall and both girls and boys basketball in the winter. Our students in grades seven and eight are also able to participate in any of the extracurricular activities through Howard Lake Waverly Winsted public schools.

6. Describe ways students demonstrate their faith through student activities.

Our student choirs take turns singing in Sunday morning worship services, as well as chapel services. A Christmas program is shared with the congregation and families, as well as a sacred concert in the spring of the year. Our seventh and eighth graders assist the preschoolers in getting to and from chapel, and also sit with and guide them through the chapel services. Their faith also is demonstrated in sportsmanship during athletic events and practices. Servanthood is practiced throughout the school year as students help in setting up for school and congregational gatherings, raking and weeding church and school property, and other activities as they are asked.

7. How are staff and volunteers prepared for supervising students during activities?

Our staff has been using the Connected Families program for a year now. Volunteers are given instruction and guidance by each teacher or staff member who they are assisting so that they are comfortable with their responsibilities. Background checks are completed through the Protect My Ministry company.

8. Describe any school-sponsored before or after school care programs.

St. James holds a Family Child Care License through Wright County. The child care program is available from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday on scheduled school days.

9. Describe any child care services that are part of, or affiliated with, the school.

St. James offers Christian before/aftercare for enrolled preschool students that takes place 5 days a week Monday-Friday from 7:00 am to 5:00 pm. Children play with friends, take part in creative activities and exploration in a nurturing, safe, well-planned environment that extends preschool themes.

10. Describe the procedures for selecting, training and equipping child care personnel.

Openings in child care are posted in the Sunday church bulletins. Persons interested in the position are interviewed by Mrs. Stacey Sparkman, and Pastor Loder. Those who are hired for help with child care must take the necessary classes and training to fulfill licensure requirements.

11. Describe and list the dates and times of emergency drills conducted in the past year.

Fire drills were held on: 9/9/22, 11/15/22, 5/9/23. Tornado drill was held on 4/20/23. Lock down drills were held on: 10/11/22, 4/5/23. We also had an active shooter drill session with local police departments and first responders on the evening of 5/9/23.

12. What are the procedures for crisis intervention and addressing medical emergencies?

Every teacher has a First Aid kit that they keep with them wherever they are during the day, so that first aid can be applied quickly and as needed. AED units are located in the staff room and near the main entrance. Calls are placed to 911, the school nurse, and parents.

13. How are teachers trained to ensure the safety and protection of students?

Teachers and staff receive blood borne pathogen training yearly from the school nurse. CPR training for the staff occurs every two to three years. Several staff members have also taken general first aid training.

14. How are student health records maintained and used?

Immunization records are on file in the student's permanent record folder, as well as with the school nurse .

15. Describe the food services provided.

St. James has a contract renewed yearly with the Howard Lake Waverly Winsted district to provide lunches and breakfasts for all our students. Milk for the morning snack breaks for grades Preschool through second grade are also provided by Howard Lake Waverly Winsted. The public district participates in the Minnesota state food program.

16. How does the school provide for the mental health of its faculty, staff and students?

Pastor Loder is available for pastoral care visits. Further mental health care is recommended when needed.

Required Evidence

Required Evidence must be attached to the Self-Study Report and used to assign a rating and complete the written comments for each General Indicator of Success. Place an "X" in the box and attach required documentation.

[Enrollment / admission policy](#)

[Crisis emergency plan \(Teacher/Staff Handbook p. 26\)](#)

- MinistrySafe** (or comparable program) training certificates for all staff, coaches, activity sponsors, and volunteers working directly with students

Required Indicator of Success

Required indicators must be answered "YES" and supported by evidence and comments for the school to be accredited in good standing. Place an "X" in the box and identify supporting evidence and practices.

6:01* Services offered by the school meet or exceed federal, state and local requirements.

YES

NO

Identify and list supporting Evidence or Practices:

- [Background Check](#)
- [Accumulative/Permanent Academic Records](#)
- [Family Handbook](#)
- [Teacher/Staff Handbook](#)
- [Enrollment Policy](#) (Family Handbook p. 8)
- [Minnesota State Regulations](#)

Comments:

St. James administration works to be familiar with federal, state, and local requirements for services and exceed those expectations. The school calendar is similar to that of the public school system.

General Indicators of Success

General Indicators of Success help the school to quantify its compliance with the Required Standards. The assignment of a rating for each General Indicator of Success is determined by the evidence and the practices that support the rating. Each general indicator is to be rated by the subcommittee, using the criterion below with the corresponding point value. A written response is required for every indicator in the "Comments" section.

6:02: Admission policies, guidance services, behavior-management programs and ancillary services provide a protective framework of necessary support for students to successfully complete the school program.

Schools must demonstrate with documented evidence and practice that they comply with the following to function at the “operational” level. Place an “X” in the boxes below which currently apply to the school.

- Student applicants are admitted per established written admission criteria.
- Permanent cumulative records for each student are maintained, stored and shared in compliance with state and federal law.
- The school administers and practices written procedures for addressing students’ emotional, social and psychological needs.
- Procedures are established for evaluating students for promotion and/or graduation.

Place an “X” in the Rating Box that Reflects the Actual Condition of the School

Highly Functional (4) Operational (3) Emerging (2) Not Evident (1)

Identify and list supporting Evidence or Practices:

- [Family Handbook](#)
- [Permanent Record](#)
- [Report Cards](#)

Comments:

St. James practices due diligence in admitting students and then maintaining confidentiality with their files. Students are evaluated according to the Promotion or Retention policy.

6:03: Extracurricular activities provide opportunities for students to further enhance God-given talents and abilities.

Schools must demonstrate with documented evidence and practice that they comply with the following to function at the “operational” level. Place an “X” in the boxes below which currently apply to the school.

- The school provides a variety of extracurricular activities that meet the needs and interests of the students and reflect the purpose of the school.

- Extracurricular activities are carefully supervised by trained personnel.
- Those who supervise extracurricular activities accept the purpose of the school.
- Background checks are completed and on file for those who supervise extracurricular activities.

Place an "X" in the Rating Box that Reflects the Actual Condition of the School

Highly Functional (4) Operational (3) Emerging (2) Not Evident (1)

Identify and list supporting Evidence or Practices:

- [Athletic Handbook](#)
- [Family Handbook](#) p.13
- [Background Check](#)

Comments:

Extracurricular activities including volleyball, basketball, and band are offered in house. All extracurricular activities offered at the public school are available for St. James students to participate. Proper supervision is maintained during these activities.

6:04: The school enacts a wide variety of policies and procedures that ensure the safety of each student and allow the school to comply with national, state and local mandates.

Schools must demonstrate with documented evidence and practice that they comply with the following to function at the "operational" level. Place an "X" in the boxes below which currently apply to the school.

- Immunization documentation, health tests and screenings conducted at the school conform with local and state laws.
- First-aid supplies are available and readily accessible to authorized personnel.
- Requirements for safety are conducted and recorded (e.g., fire, tornado, intruder and other drills).
- Plans are developed and implemented for blood-borne pathogen, asbestos, CPR, first-aid training and the distribution of medication.
- Background checks are conducted for all who have contact with students on a regular basis.

Training for the recognition of child abuse and the protection of children is required for all who have contact with students on a regular basis.

The school ensures the safety and security of its students when online.

Place an "X" in the Rating Box that Reflects the Actual Condition of the School

Highly Functional (4) Operational (3) Emerging (2) Not Evident (1)

Identify and list supporting Evidence or Practices:

- [Immunization Form](#)
- [Drill Schedule](#)
- [Teacher/Staff Handbook](#)
- [Blood-borne Pathogens Training](#)
- [CPR Training](#)
- [Mandated Reporter Training](#)
- [Go Guardian](#)

Comments:

The safety of students, staff, teachers, and visitors at St. James is very important. Regular training is completed as well as further opportunities for training is sought.

6:05: School food services meet or exceed national and state guidelines.

Schools must demonstrate with documented evidence and practice that they comply with the following to function at the "operational" level. Place an "X" in the boxes below which currently apply to the school.

Care is taken to ensure cleanliness where meals or snacks are consumed.

Where food service is provided, adequate and qualified personnel are available to plan and serve a variety of well-balanced, wholesome meals in full accordance with federal guidelines.

Place an "X" in the Rating Box that Reflects the Actual Condition of the School

Highly Functional (4) Operational (3) Emerging (2) Not Evident (1)

Identify and list supporting Evidence or Practices:

- [HLWW Food Service Guidelines](#)
- [HLWW Food Service Agreement](#)
- [Food Service License](#)
- [Inspection Certificate](#)

Comments:

Food service for St. James is provided by HLWW School District. The cook is hired by the school district. All handling of food and monies for the food service is handled by the school district. Cleaning of the kitchen, besides the floors, is done by the cook so that state standards are met and maintained.

Summary and Response Actions

Summary and response actions, related to the school’s strengths and items needing improvement, are to be provided. Subcommittees carry on the primary work of evaluating the school’s compliance with the assigned Standard through a thoughtful and purposeful evaluation of each of the General Indicators of Success. Based on any General Indicator ratings of “1” or “2”, the school must develop specific plans to improve. Plans must include specific targeted completion dates and assignments. At the discretion of the school, actions may be developed for indicators that have been rated as “3”.

A. Are the Required Indicators of Success met for Standard 6? (YES / NO)

Yes

B. Based on evidence, what are the strengths of the school related to Standard 6?

St. James provides adequate student services and activities that are offered to meet the needs and foster the growth of each student in a safe and healthy environment. Regular review and training of various needs is conducted for the teachers and staff.

C. Based on evidence, what are the challenges of the school related to Standard 6? All areas identified as “emerging” [2] or “not evident” [1] must be addressed in the School Action Plan.

There is always something available that will enhance the current training and make St. James a better school. As those opportunities are found, they will be explored and implemented as seen fit.

D. What is the school’s average rating for all General Indicators of Success for Standard 6, rounded to the nearest tenth?

STANDARD	RATING
6:02	3
6:03	3
6:04	3
6:05	3
Total:	12
Average: (Total ÷ 4)	3

STANDARD 7: FACILITIES

Buildings, grounds and equipment provide a safe and healthy environment that serves to enhance student learning.

Overview

The Lutheran school's physical facilities include the buildings, land, equipment, maintenance of the property and provisions for health, safety and sanitation. As a place for learning, the facilities help children grow spiritually, physically, mentally, socially and emotionally. School facilities demonstrate principles of harmony, order and utility. Its furnishings and décor are reflective of the Christian mission and purpose of the school.

Potential Evidence

Potential evidentiary documents provide support as the subcommittee determines the rating for each General Indicator of Success. The list includes suggestions for the documentation, but is not all-inclusive. The school reviews the list of potential evidence and determines those established at the school. Additional evidence that is not listed in the potential listing may also be presented. Evidence or lack thereof, assists the school in reaching an agreement on a rating. Potential evidence does not need to be included with the Self-Study, but is to be available for the Validation Team to review.

- Job descriptions for maintenance and cleaning staff, including reporting responsibilities and lines of accountability
- Long-range plan for facility improvements, additions or expansion
- Budget line items committing financial support of ongoing maintenance and immediate facility improvements
- Inventory of instructional hardware and equipment, including technology infrastructure
- Certificates of compliance related to health and safety practices
- Cleaning schedules and custodial duties
- School lockdown plan

Potential Practices

Like potential evidence, potential practices are identified to demonstrate how well the school is meeting the indicators. A practice describes something that is being done at the school. It is often supported with written documentation, but it can be observed in classroom activities or daily routines. Schools are to identify the practices in place. A list of suggested practices is included in the Self-Study Report, but it is not all-inclusive. The identification of practices allows the subcommittee to arrive at a rating that reflects the condition currently in place at the school. It is the combination of evidence and practices that provide the support for an indicator rating.

- Buildings and grounds reflect the institution’s commitment to maintaining a safe and productive learning environment for students
- Regular and routine inspections (e.g. fire marshal, health inspector, lunch room audit, emergency light log, facility walkthrough, elevator, fire extinguishers, etc.)
- Regularly scheduled maintenance
- Daily cleaning and sanitizing
- Safety inspections as required by local agencies
- Annual review of emergency management procedures and response
- Custodial care and/or Cleaning Service
- Service of students with specialized learning needs

Required Responses

Narrative responses are to be written for all questions at the beginning of each Standard area and included in the Self-Study document. The answers to these questions provide a school with the opportunity to describe how it meets the needs of students. This also allows the school to indicate any nuances that are unique to the school’s learning environment.

1. Describe the property (building and grounds).

St. James Lutheran School was established in 1918 and the first brick building was constructed the same year. Additions to the school took place in 1951, 1967, and 1998. The building consists of 9 classrooms, a music room, a science room, a resource room, a library / religion room, a workroom with large storage area and nurse station, 4 sets of bathrooms, a boiler room, a cafeteria with full kitchen, a regulation sized gymnasium with full kitchen, an athletic equipment room, and a main lobby with reception desk. The building is elevator accessible. Christian decor is integrated in the building as a reminder and reassurance of the Christian focus of the institution. Outdoor facilities consist of 2 outdoor storage sheds, a full-size playground, a softball/soccer field, and 2 parking lots. Across the street from the school is the church building with church offices. The church is utilized for chapel services and concerts. All facilities are located between 5th and 7th Avenue in Howard Lake, Minnesota.

2. Describe how general maintenance and repair of the physical facilities is ensured.

The Saint James Lutheran School facility is owned by Saint James Lutheran church and occupied by the school. St. James Lutheran Church’s Board of Trustees is currently responsible for the maintenance and repair of the facilities. Maintenance and repairs are completed by the trustees, hired professionals, and volunteers. The trustees act upon input from school administration and the school board.

3. Describe how the school ensures that it complies with laws, health and safety requirements and building codes and American with Disabilities Act (ADA).

St. James Lutheran School meets state requirements in regard to the facilities. If compliance issues are identified, the Board of Trustees, the administration, or the Board of Education schedule the necessary upgrades. The Howard Lake Fire Department has inspected the building and has provided St. James with fire escape routes. Tornado shelter protocols are posted and updated when necessary by school administration. The Howard Lake Police Department collaborates with other police departments in scheduling the appropriate practice lockdown drills. They also communicate with the administration on appropriate protocols for the building. St. James has a yearly elevator inspection and receives an annual operating permit from the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry. Minnesota Elevator Inc. comes in monthly and maintains the elevator. St. James has a yearly boiler inspection and receives an annual operating permit from the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry. Boiler operation is overseen by an individual with the necessary training and boiler's license. The Minnesota Department of Health biannually inspects the lunch room kitchen. St. James has a current certificate stating that it has passed all standards necessary in running the hot lunch program in the kitchen. The head cook, Mrs. Diane Odenbrett, holds a current Safe Food Serve Certification through the state of Minnesota Department of Nutrition. During the heating season, a service agreement with Honeywell is in place and provides service for the pneumatic controls in some portions of the building. Phone service is maintained by Cady Business Technologies. Internet services is provided by Centurylink. In October 2007, St. James facilities were declared asbestos free.

4. Describe the maintenance and cleaning schedule of the facility.

The Trustee Directors oversee building maintenance. Major repairs and upkeep are hired out to appropriate businesses. Minor repairs are handled by the Trustees, staff, or capable volunteers. An outside cleaning company provides custodial services.

5. What is the relationship of the school administration and faculty with the custodial staff?

The cleaning company is usually in the building after school hours and therefore have minimal interaction with the teachers. Pastor Loder communicates with the cleaning company on a regular basis to address issues and ensure proper cleaning of the building.

6. What part of the physical plant and property has been changed in the past three years?

Technology continues to be upgraded as needed on a yearly basis. This includes student devices and portable and/or permanently installed interactive smartboards in classrooms. The previous phone system was upgraded with a new ethernet based phone system. As funding allows, air conditioning is being installed, thus completing air conditioning of the entire building. Volunteers have painted as needed. New landscaping was installed on the exterior of the building as well as a new sidewalk on the outside of the preschool wing of the building.

7. What long-range plans are in place for site plan development?

A walk-through of the building occurred in June of 2023 with identified maintenance issues and long-range plans. Notable improvements include providing a more secure building, as this has become necessary. This involves the installation of protective film over all first story windows which creates a protective barrier, slowing the breaking, and gaining of entry by someone wishing to inflict harm.

8. How are students protected from external threat on campus before, during and after school?

The building is kept secure throughout the school day. The main entry/lobby doors are unlocked each morning and monitored by staff as students arrive. The doors are locked after the school day begins. Doorbells are installed at the main building entrance and main preschool entrance. If staff members cannot monitor the main entrance during the day, volunteers staff the main entrance reception desk to provide entrance for visitors. A volunteer monitors and dismisses students from the SW main entrance doors at the end of the day. Students are not to leave the building until their transportation has been identified. Students can be picked up from their classroom at other times throughout the school day by school staff or parents. Student safety and security also include lockdown procedures that are reviewed during the school year. Projected improvements include building features that enhance the building’s security and safety.

9. Describe how the school property is used by the community and outside groups and any procedures/policies that govern the use.

The building may be used by other groups as long as their activities align with St. James’ core values. The trustees approve a building usage agreement before anyone may use the building. The building is limited to the cafeteria and/or the gym, which is also the fellowship hall.

10. Describe athletic facilities and training facilities and proper monitoring, sanitation, and safety procedures in place.

St. James has a gym which is also the church fellowship hall. As with all activities, when students are present, there is adequate monitoring. The gym is cleaned daily with the rest of the school.

Required Evidence

Required Evidence must be attached to the Self-Study Report and used to assign a rating and complete the written comments for each General Indicator of Success. Place an “X” in the box and attach the required documentation.

[School floor plan](#)

[School Crisis Management Plan \(including evacuation and reunification plans\)](#)

Required Indicators of Success

Required indicators must be answered “YES” and supported by evidence and comments for the school to be accredited in good standing. Place an “X” in the box and identify supporting evidence and practices.

7:01* Facilities are well-maintained and free from hazards, providing a safe and productive learning environment for all students.

YES

NO

Identify and list supporting Evidence or Practices:

- Cleaning Company
- [Regular Building Checks by Administration](#)
- Building is Secure with Restricted Access when Students Present

Comments:

St. James is committed to being a well-maintained school that is safe and secure. As funding is available more steps will be taken to enhance safety further.

7:02* Facilities fully conform to all applicable laws, including health, safety and building codes.

YES

NO

Identify and list supporting Evidence or Practices:

- [Emergency Procedures - Teacher/Staff Handbook p. 26](#)
- [Drill Schedule](#)
- [Asbestos Free Report](#)
- [Health Inspector Certificate](#)
- Daily Cleaning
- [Boiler Certification](#)
- Elevator Inspection
- [Future Installation of Protective Film](#)

Comments:

Similar to the above question, St. James is committed to conforming to all applicable laws, including health, safety and building codes and always seeks to further enhance better methods to do so.

General Indicators of Success

General Indicators of Success help the school to quantify its compliance with the Required Standards. The assignment of a rating for each General Indicator of Success is determined by the evidence and the practices that support the rating. Each General Indicator is to be rated by the subcommittee, using the criterion below with the corresponding point value. A written response is required for every indicator in the "Comments" section.

7:03: Buildings, grounds and equipment are well maintained, clean and appropriate for the age and number of students.

Schools must demonstrate with documented evidence and practice that they comply with the following to function at the “operational” level. Place an “X” in the boxes below which currently apply to the school.

- The size and design of the buildings and teaching/learning areas are appropriate for the school’s programs and achievement of learner outcomes (objectives), meet state and local code requirements and provide for special needs.
- All teaching/learning areas are properly ventilated, lighted and have adequate space for the number and size of the students.
- The buildings are cleaned daily and the restrooms are sanitary.
- School furniture is sufficient in quantity and age appropriate.
- The school administrator(s) participates in the supervision of those who maintain the physical facilities.
- Adequate provisions exist for offices, area for students needing care, recreation, library/media center and space for small-group instruction.
- The school facility has appropriate technology infrastructure.

Place an “X” in the Rating Box that Reflects the Actual Condition of the School

- Highly Functional (4)** **Operational (3)** **Emerging (2)** **Not Evident (1)**
-

Identify and list supporting Evidence or Practices:

- Classroom Size Limit of 25
- [Updated Lighting](#)
- Cleaning Company
- [Weekly Building Inspection by Administrator](#)
- Library
- Resource Room
- Office “Grace Friday” Space
- Wifi
- Ethernet

Comments:

Though primarily an old building with many additions, the space within St. James is used well. Adequate space is provided and used by all teachers/staff. Space is available in the resource room and school office for students to receive special attention or care and have an alternative space for completing tasks. The building is cleaned every evening. Pastor Loder completes a weekly inspection of the school building and outside grounds, making note of any maintenance or safety issues, which are then communicated to the Trustee Directors. The technology infrastructure is adequate for the current usage.

7:04: Physical facilities provide specific (crosses, signs, etc.) and non-specific (attractive, adequate, etc.) Lutheran Christian witness to the community.

Schools must demonstrate with documented evidence and practice that they comply with the following to function at the “operational” level. Place an “X” in the boxes below which currently apply to the school.

- The buildings contain evidence that the school is a Lutheran Christian school.

- Christian banners, pictures and posters are displayed in the hallway, entryway, gymnasium and classrooms.

- A cross is hung in a prominent place.

- An outdoor sign provides evidence of a Lutheran Christian School to the community.

Place an “X” in the Rating Box that Reflects the Actual Condition of the School

- Highly Functional (4) Operational (3) Emerging (2) Not Evident (1)
-

Identify and list supporting Evidence or Practices:

- [Banners, Pictures, and Posters](#)
- [Crosses and Crucifixes](#)
- [Door Sign](#)
- [Building Signage](#)

Comments:

St. James is a Lutheran School which is evident in name, teaching, and visible elements. Pictures of Jesus and Christian themes in addition crosses/crucifixes are displayed throughout the school for a constant reminder of Peace and Comfort our Lord provides us.

7:05: The building and grounds provide a safe school environment.

Schools must demonstrate with documented evidence and practice that they comply with the following to function at the "operational" level. Place an "X" in the boxes below which currently apply to the school.

- Policies and procedures are in place to maintain a safe school environment.

- The playground, athletic field(s), and school grounds are properly supervised, safe and fenced when appropriate and needed.

- The school limits access to the facility, has locked entrances and is secure during normal school hours.

- Crossing guards, lanes and school speed zones are provided when and where needed.

- A safe, carefully supervised procedure for loading and unloading students in cars, buses and other vehicles is in effect.

Place an "X" in the Rating Box that Reflects the Actual Condition of the School

- Highly Functional (4) Operational (3) Emerging (2) Not Evident (1)
-

Identify and list supporting Evidence or Practices:

- [Family Handbook](#)
- [Teacher/Staff Handbook](#)
- Play Area Primarily Fenced and Fully Supervised
- Secure Access to the Building

Comments:

Similar to what has been said already about safety, much care is taken to ensure students are safe. Students are not released unless an identifiable responsible adult is visible.

Summary and Response Actions

Summary and response actions, related to the school's strengths and items needing improvement, are to be provided. Subcommittees carry on the primary work of evaluating the school's compliance with the assigned standard through a thoughtful and purposeful evaluation of each of the general indicators of success. Based on any general indicator ratings of "1" or "2", the school must develop specific plans to improve. Plans must include specific targeted completion dates and assignments. At the discretion of the school, actions may be developed for indicators that have been rated as "3".

A. Are the Required Indicators of Success met for Standard 7? (YES / NO)

Yes

B. Based on evidence, what are the strengths of the school related to Standard 7?

The St. James Lutheran Church & School has a campus environment with the two main buildings of the Church and School between 5th and 7th Street. All instructional and building resources are easily accessed. Technology is up to date with Promethean boards in classrooms and the use of iPads for K-4th grade and 5-8th Chromebooks for education purposes. St. James has a modern playground, and the gym is less than 20 years old and is well-maintained.

C. Based on evidence, what are the challenges of the school related to Standard 7? All areas identified as "emerging" [2] or "not evident" [1] must be addressed in the School Action Plan.

There can always be improvements. Pastor Loder is seeking a grant to fund 3M glass film that protects from gunfire or other projectiles.

D. What is the school's average rating for all General Indicators of Success for Standard 7, rounded to the nearest tenth?

STANDARD	RATING
7:03	3
7:04	3
7:05	3
Total:	9
Average: (Total ÷ 3)	3

IDENTIFICATION OF POWERFUL PRACTICES

Identify and provide an explanation of any practices (please limit to no more than three) that may be *Powerful Practices*. It should be noted that schools may meet all accreditation standards without identifying any *Powerful Practices*.

NLSA seeks to identify and share powerful practices that make it a highly respected educational institution in its community. *Powerful Practices* are carefully researched, collaboratively established and dynamically affect student learning and/or ministry opportunities in a Lutheran school. These are the practices that have the potential for replication in other Lutheran schools.

A school's *Powerful Practice* is much more than an expectation that quantifies Standard compliance. It innovates and exceeds accreditation expectations. It is a calculated risk that results in significant reward for students. Therefore, it is a desirable condition that has ramifications for schools throughout the LCMS.

Identify any potential Powerful Practices in the space below:

PRELIMINARY SCHOOL ACTION PLAN

A preliminary School Action Plan is developed as the concluding process of the school’s Self-Study. The plan must address every area of concern (“emerging” [2] and “not evident” [1]). Each concern must be noted and addressed. “Operational” [3] indicators may also be addressed in the preliminary School Action Plan. The preliminary School Action Plan must be attached to the Self-Study document.

NLSA Preliminary School Action Plan												
School Name: St. James Lutheran School												
School Address: 1000 6th Ave, PO Box 680, Howard Lake, MN 55349												
LCMS District: MNS												
Administrator: Rev. Mark Loder												
Date of Most Recent NLSA Validation Team Visit: 2018												
Accreditation Year		Preliminary		Year 1		Year 2		Year 3		Year 4		Year 5
Standard & Indicator Number	Self-Study Concerns & Strategies			Target School Year	Responsible Party	Action Taken	School Year Addressed					
3A-08	External Review			2026	BoE Chair							
3B-02	Administration Licensure			2028	Pastor							
4-02	Teacher Licensure			2024	Teachers							
4-03	Professional Org. Membership			2025	Teachers/Staff							
5-08	Assessment of Student Achievement			2025	Pastor							

SCHOOL ACTION PLAN

NOTE: DO NOT Complete Prior to Validation Team Visit

The School Action Plan is developed from the Preliminary School Action Plan originally submitted with the school’s Self-Study and updated with the input from the Validation Team. The plan must address every area of concern (“emerging” [2] and “not evident” [1]). Each concern must be noted and addressed. “Operational” [3] indicators may also be addressed in the School Action Plan. This Plan will guide the school through the next five years in a process of continuous improvement prior to the next Self-Study process and Validation Team visit.

The completed NLSA Final School Action Plan must be included along with a separate copy of the NLSA Preliminary School Action Plan and the school’s Strategic Plan in the final submission of the school’s Self-Study to the District Accreditation Commission.

NLSA Final School Action Plan												
School Name:												
School Address:												
LCMS District:												
Administrator:												
Date of Most Recent NLSA Validation Team Visit:												
Accreditation Year	<input type="text"/>	Initial	<input type="text"/>	Year 1	<input type="text"/>	Year 2	<input type="text"/>	Year 3	<input type="text"/>	Year 4	<input type="text"/>	Year 5
Standard & Indicator Number	Self-Study Concerns & Strategies				Target School Year	Responsible Party	Action Taken	School Year Addressed				