



# NLSA Executive Committee

## Report

July 28, 2016

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### I. Mission, Purpose, Vision, and Values of NLSA

#### Mission:

NLSA encourages and recognizes schools that provide quality, Christian education and engage in continuous improvement.

#### Purpose:

- Help all Lutheran schools improve.
- Help all Lutheran schools evaluate themselves based on their unique purposes.
- Assure a level of quality for accredited Lutheran schools based on national standards.
- Give appropriate recognition to those schools that complete the process successfully.

#### Vision:

The Great Commission of our Lord Jesus Christ, “Go and make disciples,” includes ministering to children. He also encourages, “Let the children come to me.” Lutheran schools serve children and families by providing God-pleasing, quality learning experiences, adult-child relationships, and nurturing environments.

National Lutheran School Accreditation (NLSA) provides a service that empowers our schools to develop and improve high-quality, Christ-centered education through a voluntary process.

#### Values:

- Lutheran Culture
- Educational Excellence
- Continuing Improvement
- Innovation

### II. Review of Evidenced Based Accreditation (EBA) Process

#### General Indicators of Success

General indicators of success help the school quantify its compliance with the required standard. Quantify your school’s compliance by evaluating the criterion defined below. Schools should provide specific evidence and/or practices for each indicator that led to your rating selection. School should write a response under the “Comments” section on all indicators.

**Highly Functional (4) — This is an area of outstanding strength of the school.** It not only meets ALL of the benchmarks related to the general indicator, but is supported by extensive documentation and/or observable practices that exceed expectations related to this indicator. This indicator establishes practices for other Lutheran schools to consider. The Visiting Team will verify that these practices and/or documentation exceed the Operational (3) level.

**Operational (3) — This is the expected rating for a strong Lutheran school.** ALL benchmarks must be met completely for this indicator to be considered Operational. The condition is supported with documentation and/or observable practices that support the rating.

**Emerging (2) — Improvement is required in this area.** If one or more benchmarks are not fully met, the rating must be Emerging. This indicator is recognized as important by the school, but is inconsistently applied. Any benchmark not fully met must be addressed in the School Action Plan.

**Not Evident (1) — There is observable conflict or deficiency with this indicator at the school.** Less than the majority of the expected benchmarks are not met or addressed with sufficient practices, evidence, or documentation. This rating shall result in the assignment of Provisional Status. This must be addressed in the School Action Plan.

## **Levels of Accreditation**

The National Accreditation Commission has sole authority to accredit schools, change, or revoke a school's accreditation status. All NLSA accredited schools maintain an active status of accreditation for the term that is prescribed by NLSA policy. A school may be assigned with an additional status depending on its qualifications; the determination by the National Accreditation Commission will consider the recommendations made by the visiting team and/or District Accreditation Commission, but the final assignment will be made by the National Accreditation Commission.

### **1. Accredited In Good Standing – With Distinction (beginning in 2017/2018)**

Accreditation with Distinction may be awarded to schools with overall school accreditation averages that fall within the top 5 percent of the group of schools that were accredited within the year. Schools using a protocol other than EBA as their primary accrediting process may be considered upon the request of their district.

### **2. Accredited in Good Standing**

An accredited school in good standing successfully concludes an NLSA process or completes a process associated with recognized accreditation partners, complies with required standards and indicators of success, and is committed to continuing school improvement. This is a significant accomplishment.

### **3. Accredited – Provisional Status**

An accredited school with provisional states concludes an NLSA process or completes a process associated with recognized accreditation partners. The school has failed to comply with any single required evidence or indicator, or has major deficiencies, but demonstrates a commitment to continuing school improvement. A school using the EBA protocol that is assigned any general indicator rating of "1" results in the automatic designation of Accreditation with Provision.

The District Accreditation Commission may request consideration of the assignment of provisional accreditation in its report as part of its accreditation recommendation. The request should include the justifications for the recommendation, specific recommendations for remediation, and a suggested time frame for resolution.

Provisionally accredited schools must complete corrective action identified by the National Accreditation Commission within the prescribed time frame (not to exceed two years) or risk the revocation of their accreditation status.



## NLSA Powerful Practices

Powerful Practices are unique practices that set a school apart and make it a highly respected educational institution in its community. Powerful Practices have been carefully researched, collaboratively established, and dynamically affect student learning and (or) ministry opportunities in a Lutheran school.

An NLSA Powerful Practice is much more than an expectation that quantifies standard compliance. It innovates and exceeds accreditation expectations. It is a calculated risk that has resulted in significant reward for students. Therefore, it is a desirable condition that has positive ramifications for the schools in our LCMS school alliance.

Visiting teams and the District Accreditation Commission (DAC) may nominate a practice observed for special recognition during an accreditation visit, apart from the accreditation rating that has been received by a school. Powerful Practices to be shared with other Lutheran schools will be determined by the Executive Committee. Powerful Practices result from a "WOW" factor that is recognized by a team and could have the ability to significantly transform other schools if implemented.

In the year following the award of accreditation schools with Powerful Practices will be solicited to share their practices in print form and webinars with our national Lutheran school audience. In addition there will be opportunities to share powerful practices at national and district sponsored events and conferences and staff development activities planned by schools.

1. St. Paul Lutheran School	Fort Worth TX	Scott Browning
2. First Immanuel Lutheran School	Cedarburg, WI	Dawn Walker
3. Lutheran Special School and Educational Services	Milwaukee, WI	Judy Schultz
4. St. Paul Lutheran School	Westlake, OH	Dale Lehrke
5. Concordia University Early Childhood Center	River Forest, IL	Doris Knuth
6. Grace Lutheran School	Pocatello, ID	Anne Bopp

## Revocation of Accreditation

### A. Violations that may lead to revocation:

1. Fees not paid by January 1.
2. Cumulative Annual reports not submitted within two months of the due date.
3. No evidence of continued improvement based on review of the visiting team report recommendations.
4. Assigned actions associated with terms of provisional status have not been fulfilled.
5. Major deficiencies realized since the site visit.

### B. When an NLSA accredited school is closed, accreditation is forfeited. To become re-accredited, the school must re-apply and successfully complete the process if it re-opens.

### C. Action to be taken:

1. Revocation will be done automatically by the NLSA director for violations (1) and (2) listed above.
2. Action on violations (3), (4), and (5) will be taken by the NLSA National Accreditation Commission at its annual meeting. These actions may be taken as a result of a recommendation by a District Accreditation Commission, although district recommendation is not required prior to action by the National Accreditation Commission.

### III. School Shepherd Award

A pastor who is nominated:

1. Understands and articulates a clear philosophy of Lutheran education;
2. Provides spiritual encouragement, guidance, and support for the community;
3. Engages and participates in school activities;
4. Works well with the governing body of the school and/or parent advisory associations
5. Champions the school;
6. Has completed a minimum of three (3) years of service at the church and school in which he serves;
7. Is endorsed by the school administrator(s) and the families served;
8. Is endorsed by the LCMS District Education Executive and District President.

The following pastors have been nominated to be considered for the synodical School Shepherd Award:

- |                         |  |                  |
|-------------------------|--|------------------|
| 1. Rev. Phillip Sallach | Holy Ghost Lutheran School             | Niagra Falls, NY |
| 2. Rev. Jeremy Schultz  | St John's Lutheran School,             | Arnold, MO       |
| Rev Andy Baker          | St. John's Lutheran School,            | Arnold, MO       |
| 3. Rev. David Smith     | St Paul Lutheran School                | Des Peres, MO    |
| 4. Rev. Karl Koeppen    | St Paul Lutheran School                | Bourbonnais, IL  |
| 5. Rev. Kevin Jud       | Immanuel Lutheran School               | Hamilton, OH     |
| 6. Rev. Marl Nebel      | St John Lutheran School                | Red Bud, IL      |
| 7. Rev. Stephen Woodfin | Our Shepherd Lutheran School           | Birmingham, MI   |
| 8. Rev. Thomas Eggold   | Emmanuel – St. Michael Lutheran School | Fort Wayne, IN   |
| 9. Rev. John Stube      | Ascension Lutheran School              | Fort Wayne, IN   |
| 10. Rev. David Schwan   | Zion Lutheran School                   | Rapid City, SD   |
| Rev. Paul Winckler      | Zion Lutheran School                   | Rapid City, SD   |

### IV. Suggestions from Districts

**The following suggestions are currently being addressed or have already been addressed:**

1. Add "Date of Visit" to the Face Sheet.
2. Keep the early childhood component.
3. Update new rating definitions for EBA on the Portal.
4. The operational rating is confusing for schools.
5. Share information on upcoming changes to the process that were determined during our spring meeting.
6. Publish all updated materials as quickly as possible.
7. Update team report submission checklists to match the EBA terminology.
8. Develop clean and concise standard forms for visit teams, self-study, etc.
9. Make no further changes with NLSA until 2019.
10. Update the Face Sheet.
11. Update the exit power point used by the visiting team.
12. Hold training events for EBA at all levels of leadership (captains, team members, administrators, etc.)
13. Create a short visiting team webinar that instructs critical points of emphasis for powerful practices and school shepherd recognition.
14. Include page numbers, school year dates, and activities conducted during the current school year in bold.

**The following suggestions will not be addressed at this time:**

1. Add environment stewardship to the facilities standards.
2. Establish reduced accreditation fee for small schools, especially preschools.
3. Consider developing a document that incorporates grades PS-12.



4. Create a more comprehensive report for the EBA process.
5. Require schools to cite powerful practices if it rates itself as highly functional.
6. Add a letter from a teacher to the school shepherd award process. (possible change)
7. Consider changing the wording for ratings.

Highly Functional – This is an area of outstanding strength of the school. It not only meets all of the bullet points under the general indicator, but extensive documentation and observable practice are also evident. The indicator is one that should set the standard for other schools by provide best practices to share.

Operational – This is the expected operating condition. Potential evidence and practices support ALL bulleted points under the general indicator by documentation and/or evidence.

Emerging – Improvement is required in this area. The general indicator is inconsistently or irregularly applies. The majority of bullet points (50% or more) are supported with sufficient practices, evidence, or documentation, but not all are met.

Not Evident – There is observable conflict or deficiency with the general indicator. Less than the majority of the bullet points (less than 50%) are not met or addressed with sufficient practices, evidence, or documentation.

8. Consider increasing the number of standard indicators to 80 or 90.

**A clarification document will be provided regarding the following suggestions:**

1. Consider allowing consultants to serve on visiting teams.
2. Prepare guidelines on completing school annual reports.
3. Maintain consistency and timely communication when a school applies for accreditation.
4. Ensure that consultants are aware of their responsibility.
5. Examine the rating system so that excellent schools are not penalized for having staff members who are not Called.
6. Provide additional instruction on procedure for requesting an extension and reporting required during the year of extension.
7. Include instruction that schools must complete cumulative annual report for the year of extension.
8. Clarify annual reporting responsibilities for dually accredited schools, including information on how deficiencies should be reported.
9. Streamline the cumulative annual report form and provide expectations and examples.
10. Provide direction on dually accredited school so they are not doing double work, but there is accountability for the reporting and consistency in review.
11. Provide space on the visiting team report to explain, beyond citing a concern and recommendation, why the team raised or lowered a school's rating, especially when changing a 4 to a 3.
12. Develop a template for the school action plan.
13. Develop directives to instruct schools with multiple sites applying for accreditation.
14. Include instructions about curriculum, facility differences, and scoring for each building.
15. Develop specific instruction for schools to complete their cumulative annual reports.

## **V. Updated NLSA Documents**

## **VI. [www.LuthEd.org](http://www.LuthEd.org)**

**+++ Thank you for your service on the National Accreditation Commission! +++**