

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

Revised July 2017

PART 2

The Self-Study Document

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Please note that Part 1 of the Self-Study is NOT submitted to the Validation Team members, District Accreditation Commission, National Accreditation Commission, or the LCMS School Ministry Office.

Part 2 of the Self-Study is the “working document” and IS required to be submitted to the Validation Team members and the District Accreditation Commission.

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

1. School

Name: St. James Evangelical Lutheran School

Address: 108 South James Street P.O. Box 315

City, State, Zip Code: Northrop, Minnesota 56075

Phone: 507-436-5547 or 5289

Email: principal@sjlnorthrop.com or sjlnorthrop@gmail.com

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

Name, Complete Address: St. James Lutheran Church
108 South James Street P.O. Box 315
Northrop, Minnesota 56075

Supporting Congregation: Zion Lutheran Church, Fraser Township
1623 170th Street
Fairmont, MN 56031

3. School Administrator(s)

Name: Rev. John Henry III, Head of School/Heidi Koeritz, Head Teacher

Email: principal@sjlnorthrop.com

Phone: (507) 436-5547

4. Pastor(s)

Name: Rev. John Henry III

Email: john.henryiii85@gmail.com

Phone: (507)436-5289

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.

Steering Committee:

Bart Johnson – President of Congregation

Patty Blaufuss – Parent

Nicole Nelson – Parent

Paul Tomlinson – Board of Christian Education Chairman

Heidi Koeritz – Teacher

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

Community Information

1. Write a brief history of the school.

St. James Evangelical Lutheran School was established in 1890 at the same time the St. James congregation was formed. It was then known as St. James Lutheran Church of Rutland Township. The church building also functioned as the school until 1903 when the first school building was erected, also in Rutland township. The pastors of the congregation were also the teachers of the school until 1913. The church and school were moved to the community of Northrop in 1940. As school enrollment grew, the need for a second classroom was seen. In 1948 the congregation adopted the plans of an architect, construction began in June, and the building was dedicated in November.

In 1966 a kindergarten teacher was hired; the kindergarten convened in the church basement for the first several years. At that time, the staff consisted of two full-time teachers and a half-day kindergarten teacher.

A preschool was established to extend the outreach and mission of the school and to serve as a feeder to the school. It was dropped in 1987 but resumed in 1991, and it has been part of our school ever since then.

In 1995, there was a building project that added two new classrooms to the school. As part of this project, one of the older, existing classrooms was converted into a computer room and an office. Also in 1995, a third teacher was hired for grades one through eight, with grades 1-3 in the lower room, grades 4-6 in the middle room, and grades 7-8 in the upper room. In 2002, a fourth teacher was added to the teaching staff. Lack of space in the current school building necessitated that grades 3-4 be housed in an off-campus location. These two grades met in the Northrop City Hall, which is across the street from the main school building. Upon recommendation of the Visiting Committee we have now ceased use of the off-site classroom. A decrease in enrollment forced a reduction in staff in 2008. During the following years, teachers retired and were replaced by new staff. Every year, projected enrollment is determined and evaluated to determine the configuration of teaching staff and classes [who will teach which grade(s)] for the upcoming school year.

In 2012, the transition from half-day to all-day kindergarten was made. This factor plays a big role in helping determine the configuration of our teaching staff and classes for each subsequent year as we stretch five people to fill six positions. In 2017 our four full-time and one half-time teaching staff became a full-time faculty of five. In 2020, a Teachers' Aide for two days per week was added to this configuration; in 2021, this teachers' Aide position has transitioned to three days per week.

The current teaching configuration is as follows: Pre-kindergarten/Kindergarten Teachers' Aide—Mrs. Laura Henry; Pre-kindergarten/Kindergarten--Mrs. Kristen Schoen; Grades 1-2—Mrs. Heidi Koeritz; Grades 3-4—Mrs. Cindy Wolter; Grades 5-6—Mrs. Elizabeth Meyer

As part of our growth and history, it was in 1963 that the school began transporting its own students with the purchase of its first van/bus. Several vans were purchased over the years, and in 1997 the school purchased two 23-passenger buses to use on the morning and afternoon runs while a minivan was kept to pick up preschool students and transport kindergarten students

home. In 2018, the bus that was being used was traded in on the used bus currently in use—a newer, lower-mileage 10-seat up-to-30 passenger bus.

There has been little change in the makeup of the student body in the last seven years. Most of our students still come from LCMS families. There have been some minority students in the school over the years. Currently there are five, just under 10% of students enrolled here; that is more than double what it was just three years ago. Membership at St. James Lutheran is showing some growth, and there are a number of young families with children. Nonetheless, we continue to be dependent upon attendance from the surrounding communities to maintain or increase our enrollment.

2. Describe the community surrounding the school.

Northrop has become a bedroom community to several of the larger towns and villages nearby. The village of Northrop has a population under 200. Its history was as a very small community of just a few families. This has changed very quickly. Now many of the family names which once made up over 90% of its population now make up less than 15% of the present population. Northrop's boundaries are set and there is no room to build in the community at the present time.

There are elementary students that presently live in Northrop who are members of other denominations, and many of these students attend the elementary grades in Fairmont. The high school students of Northrop attend either Martin Luther High School located in Northrop or one of the four public school districts located within a few miles of Northrop. In our most recent history, the majority of our eighth grade students choose to attend Martin Luther High School located in Northrop.

The increased enrollment St. James experienced in the past decade was a result of students enrolling from the surrounding communities. This increase led to a demand in bussing, and we operated two buses with routes going out east and west from our school. While there continues to be interest from the communities of Trimont, Truman, Fairmont, and Granada, as well as Northrop, we are unable to economically bus from all these communities. However we do work closely with the local bus companies and school districts and continue to operate our own bus which maintains one route to our west. We praise God for the interest shown by families in these communities. Our challenge is to create greater interest and support within all these communities and the non-Lutherans in the community of Northrop, while remaining true to our doctrine. We will not sacrifice the truth we teach for a greater mass appeal.

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

The church fire and school damage in 2016, the pastor's arrest in 2017, the sanctuary, fellowship hall, and gym rebuilding process of 2017-2019, and the pandemic of 2020 served to severely stress, yet ultimately strengthen the SJL faculty, staff, and families.

School Enrollment Information

1. What is the total current school enrollment?

Total enrollment for the 2021-2022 school year was 56 (Preschool: 8 / K-8: 48)

Total enrollment for the 2022-2023 school year was 50 (Preschool: 12 / K-6: 38)

2. Review the responses on the *LCMS Early Childhood Center and School Statistical Report* 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.

Of the 50 students enrolled in PK-6th for the 22-23 school year, 62% were in grades PK-2nd.

The transition of grades 7 & 8 to MLHS did not drop our total enrollment significantly. It opened up space to provide for more preschoolers.

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

Age	Number of Children	
0	Z 2	SJ 3
1	Z 4	SJ 5
2	Z 5	SJ 6
3	Z 4	SJ 1
4	Z 2	SJ 2
5	Z 4	SJ 3
6	Z 3	SJ 4
7	Z 4	SJ 3
8	Z 7	SJ 7
9	Z 2	SJ 3
10	Z 4	SJ 3
11	Z 3	SJ 0
12	Z 2	SJ 2
13	Z 3	SJ 3
14	Z 4	SJ 6
15	Z 2	SJ 4
16	Z 2	SJ 4
17	Z 2	SJ 11
18	Z 4	SJ 2
Total:	Z 63	SJ 72

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

CY	K	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	Total
2023	5	8	8	6	3	6	2	N/A	N/A	38
2024	5	5	8	8	6	3	6	N/A	N/A	41
2025	5	5	5	8	8	6	3	N/A	N/A	40
2026	5	5	5	5	8	8	6	N/A	N/A	42
2027	4	5	5	5	5	8	8	N/A	N/A	40

Incoming Kindergarten enrollment numbers are based on historical enrollment numbers and the current congregational membership of children at the appropriate age.

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

At this moment, we do not have a space issue that limits our student population. However, should our enrollment continue to increase, this could become a concern in the next few years.

- **Staff Information – Teachers and Administrators**

Teachers and Administrators

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

[C. Wolter](#)

[K. Schoen](#)

[H. Koeritz](#)

[E. Meyer](#)

[L. Henry](#)

[L. Fehr](#)

1. Faculty Member:

Staff Information – Teachers and Administrators

Teachers and Administrators

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

1. Faculty Member: Laura Henry

2. Academic degrees held:

Degree *BA English* *Institution Bethany Lutheran College*

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

Course *Institution* *Graduate Hours* *College Degree(s)*
Real Essentials Relationship Education and Leadership certification The Center for Relationship Education

4. Teaching or school administration experience:

<i>School Name</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Dates</i>
Little Praisers Childcare and Preschool	Ft. Wayne, IN	September 2008-June2010
Trinity Lutheran School	Reese, MI	June 2010-May 2011
St. James Lutheran School	Northrop, MN	September 2020-Present

5. Current participation in congregational activities:

<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Participation</i>
Junior High Sunday School Teacher	Prepare and implement weekly lessons
LWML Member	Attend meetings and assist in events as needed

6. Current membership in professional organizations:

<i>Organization Name</i>	<i>Area of Focus</i>
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7. Current teaching license(s) held:

<i>Certificate(s)</i>	<i>Expiration Date</i>
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2. Academic degrees held:

Degree *Institution*

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 *Location* *Dates*

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*

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>
Heather Wiederhoeft	Church secretary	26	2
Heather Wiederhoeft	Bus Driver	20	6
Sandra & Gary Luhmann	Custodians	20	3
Mary Ringeisen	Food Service Manager	20	7
Myla Roskop	Food Service Assistant	10	2
Monica Pavich	Preschool Aide	9	1
Linnette Fehr	Reading Specialist	13	4 months

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:

St. James Lutheran School receives support services from the Fairmont Public School District. The public health nurse employed through the public district provides clerical support on the immunization of our children and does the reporting of same to the Minnesota Department of Health. She also reports on influenza outbreaks and provides local support for other medical needs. Health screening K-8 is also provided on site by the public district. Title services are available to 1-6 grades on site daily by the public district. As of the 23-24 school year, the title funds allocated to SJL will funnel through Lutheran Special Education Ministries, and the instructor, Linnette Fehr, will be employed by LSEM in order to provide additional support to those students needing extra services. Linnette Fehr has also been hired by SJL directly for extra reading instructional support. We have also received suggestions for and descriptions of interventions, plus support materials from Fairmont Elementary School in order to respond effectively to student needs. Speech therapy services are provided online via Zoom by the public district. Special education services are provided online via Zoom, or in person at the public school building. The Minnesota Motor Bus company that provides transportation for the Fairmont school district also provides services to our school. Our students may also ride the Truman/Granada bus to and from St. James Lutheran School.

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
- Students in Grades 1 – 3
- Students in Grades 4 – 6

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. Reflections of survey results are to be prepared, in summary form, for each area.

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

Summarize the survey information in the space below:

Survey Questions and Response Graphs

Survey Summaries

Grades 1-3

There were 15 responses in Grades 1-3. Each child was assisted in reading the questions, the response choices and questions were explained, and the child recorded their responses. Looking over the survey results we concluded that the overall responses were very positive, but that not every child was having a good day at the time. However, the outlying “disagree” or “strongly disagree” responses were not ignored, especially in regard to the “I feel safe at school” response. We actively try to listen, observe, and encourage the children to be honest and open about their feelings. Under “I know what my teacher wants me to learn” 20% of the children disagreed. This statement may have been interpreted in different ways, but we will try to be more clear on what we want them to learn. Under “I use a computer at my school”, 20% disagreed and we think this is accurate. We do not have 1:1 student tablets, and the early grades are more hands-on and less screen time intentionally.

Grades 4-6

There were 13 responses in grades 4-6. Each child completed the survey on their own online. Looking over the survey results we concluded that the responses were positive overall. We were pleased to see that students all agreed that the teachers care about them, pray with them, and talk about Jesus every day. Some areas of concern will be addressed. One student responded with “strongly disagree” regarding “My teacher wants me to do my best work.” Upon further investigation we strongly believe this was an unintended response. There were also some concerns about the availability of a quiet place to work. We agree. Our school facility is quite small and often it is difficult to find a truly quiet place to study. We do have noise-canceling headphones available for student use. Our school building is 80+ years old and has certain smells and stains to go with it. Students that previously enjoyed the 3-year-old fellowship hall and restrooms are now questioning the cleanliness of the older building. We believe our custodians do a great job of cleaning and sanitizing.

Finally, and most importantly, there was one student's response of “somewhat disagree” to the statement “My school is safe.” This greatly concerned us, and we chose to speak privately with that student, at which time the response was clarified.

Parents

There were 31 responses to the parent survey which represents about 70% of the overall parent population. Overall, we are pleased with the results of this survey. In 2015 the communication between teachers and parents was a concern. Since then, we have actively worked to improve in this area and the current survey results reflect this.

Some current areas of concern we intend to address are technology, extracurricular activities, and challenging exceptional students. Regarding technology, we have since purchased all new laptops for the teachers, the computer lab, and classroom use. We have purchased one new interactive whiteboard and

are in the process of fundraising to replace the smartboards in the other classrooms. We prefer to emphasize personal and effective verbal and written communication between students, teachers, and their peers.

In the area of extracurricular activities, we offer a variety of sports for the upper grades. However, we agree with the survey in that we would like to offer more after-school activities that are not sport-related and are available to all students.

There was a “disagree” response to the “My student is challenged” statement. We would like to acknowledge that this is a legitimate response in certain situations. We tend to focus more on the children that need more help, but we recognize that exceptional students should not be ignored and should be provided with meaningful challenges.

Teachers

With only 5 respondents possible, the teacher survey has a wide range of results depending on the answer of an individual. During a group faculty discussion regarding the survey results, some statements were understood in different ways, thus shifting the final results.

The statement “our school is respected and known in the community” has always been interesting.

Those that know us respect us. However, we sometimes get overlooked for several reasons:

1. People think we're part of Martin Luther High School.
2. People get SJL confused with the nearby town of St. James.
3. Northrop is just a tiny town of 125 people. The town itself often gets overlooked.
4. Although we are physically in the Fairmont Public School District, that fact is often forgotten even by the Fairmont Public School District. We are not the only Lutheran school in the district.

In regard to “Appropriate feedback about my teaching skills”, formal observations have not been completed in several years. They will be completed in the near future. We do ask each other for advice and feedback frequently.

As was mentioned in the student and parent surveys as well, the integration of technology is happening here at SJL, but not in the form of 1:1 student devices. This is intentional. Laptops are available to all students. Concerns have arisen regarding the age and functionality of our current interactive whiteboards. We are actively fundraising towards upgrades.

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 action 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.

- School learning objectives align with philosophy/mission.
- School publications and handbooks provide evidence of Lutheran identity.
- Promotional materials give evidence of Lutheran identity.
- School evangelism plan is written.
- Written school policies align with philosophy/mission.
- School website provides evidence of Lutheran identity.
- Appropriate seasonal decorations are displayed.
- Christian symbols are appropriately and prominently displayed through 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 t

he 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 faith is allocated with appropriate classroom time in the daily schedule and integrated throughout the curriculum.
- The school attempts to attain and retain 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.

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?

In the fall of 1997, several meetings were held to discuss the mission of the school, its place in the evangelical outreach of the church, and the school's relationship to St. James Lutheran Church congregation. These meetings were attended by the school administrator, a teacher, the church Sunday School Superintendent, a church council member, and the pastor of the congregation. During these meetings the mission statements of other Lutheran schools and organizations were examined and discussed, along with pertinent scripture passages. As the work progressed, members of the committee took drafts to their respective organizations for examination. Focus groups were also used. The statement was verbose at first, as we wanted to be all inclusive and felt there was much we wished to accomplish. Through prayerful work, the statement was condensed to what we adopted. This statement is prominently displayed in each classroom and throughout the school and church facilities.

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

The stated purpose of the school and church are identical, as noted on the Mission Statement.

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

The staff of the school was asked if they felt the mission statement needed to be changed, and the BOCE examined the mission statement. Both entities felt that we had not changed our focus: Jesus, a Christ-centered learning environment, and quality academics. Therefore, we did not change it.

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

Christian [symbols](#) and [murals](#) are prominently displayed in the school. Religion is taught every day in each classroom. SJLS uses the CPH religion series One in Christ. All materials are doctrinally reviewed and approved. Students memorize important passages that reflect the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod doctrinal stance on justification, the Trinity, and the sacraments. Each student purchases a Luther's Small Catechism for instruction, and they are trained up in the Six Chief Parts. Seventh and Eighth graders receive confirmation/catechesis training by the pastor of the congregation whether they are members of St. James Lutheran Church or not. All third grade students are gifted a Bible by Eve's Circle.

Twice-weekly chapel services are led by the pastor in the church sanctuary. These are often attended by community members. Students are introduced to portions of the Lutheran liturgy and follow an order of service that includes the Apostles' Creed and Lord's Prayer.

In 2019 a [St James Lutheran logo](#) for both [school and church](#) was professionally designed to be used on our website, newspaper ads, newsletters, letterheads, and other marketing information. It reflects our Lutheran identity and is centered on the cross. Various apparel items are made available to the faculty, staff, school children, and congregation.

In addition, each year a theme that focuses on Jesus is chosen by the faculty. A [logo](#) is designed and shirts for the faculty and staff are made that reflect the theme and carry the scripture message. Faculty wear these shirts weekly and to public events. A hymn is also selected to fit with this theme and is sung throughout the year.

5. Describe how the school's purpose is reflected in the teaching/learning environment in every classroom.

Christian symbols, murals, and artwork are prominently displayed throughout the school and within each classroom. [The Mission Statement](#) is prominently displayed in each classroom. The chosen theme for the year is made into posters or banners and is on display in each classroom and the hallway bulletin boards. Teachers daily share God's love through their words and actions in the classroom. Students are given the opportunity to share and develop their God-given talents through the classroom and extra-curricular activities in order to live out the school's purpose. Annually during National Lutheran Schools Week activities, students in all grade levels are given the opportunity to interact, and connected to the global church through a mission project interwoven into the week (Gospel Adventure world mission component).

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

The SJLS Mission Statement is the guiding principle in our hiring process. It is discussed during the hiring process, and it is prominent in the Faculty Handbook. Expectations for the teacher are outlined in the teacher job description that interviewees and new hires are given. administrator and senior staff model this behavior and new staff are encouraged and guided to follow this example.

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 purpose/philosophy/mission statement

[Written purpose/philosophy/mission statement](#)

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:

- [School publications](#) and handbooks provide evidence of Lutheran identity.
- [Promotional materials](#) give evidence of Lutheran identity.
- Written school policies align with philosophy/mission.
- School website www.sjlnorthrop.com provides evidence of Lutheran identity.
- Appropriate [seasonal decorations](#) are displayed.
- [Christian symbols](#) are appropriately and prominently displayed through the school.
- Teachers recognize and verbalize that the teaching of the faith is the main purpose of the school.
- The school attempts to attain and retain a positive Christian image through its [public relations](#) and publications.
- The sponsoring and supporting congregations provide spiritual support for the school and its students.
- The school encourages students to participate in the [congregational life](#) of the parish.
- The school cooperates with district and national offices of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.
- 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.

Comments:

Although staffing has changed, our mission and purpose remain constant.

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

YES

NO

Identify and list supporting Evidence or Practices:

- Christian symbols are appropriately and prominently displayed through the school.
- Teachers recognize and verbalize that the teaching of the faith is the main purpose of the school.
- Teaching of the faith is allocated with appropriate classroom time in the daily schedule and integrated throughout the curriculum.
- The school attempts to attain and retain a positive Christian image through its public relations and publications.
- The sponsoring and supporting congregations provide 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 seeks to evangelize unchurched or marginally churched children and their families.
- 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 bi-weekly worship (chapel) experiences intentionally designed to consciously and systematically strengthen the Christian faith of all members of the school community.

Comments:

The staff begins and ends each day with a circle group prayer open to all students and parents. Class prayers are performed prior to lunch daily.

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.

Highly Functional (4) — This is an area of outstanding strength of the school. It not only meets ALL the benchmarks related to the General Indicator of Success, but is supported by extensive documentation and/or observable practices that exceed expectations related to the indicator. This indicator establishes practices for other Lutheran schools to consider. The Validation Team verifies 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. A majority of the expected benchmarks are not met or addressed with sufficient practices, evidence or documentation. This rating may result in the assignment of Provisional Status. This must be addressed in the School Action Plan.

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:

- [Mission Statement](#) of the school and that of the congregation are identical.
- [Constitution](#)
- [Mission statement in the Student Handbook](#) and [faculty handbook](#)
- CPH Curriculum is used for religion program

Comments:

The school is able to show the love of Christ through the actions of its teachers in the classroom as well as through the fact that Jesus is evident throughout the school. Students show the love of Christ through positive interactions with each other and around the community.

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:

- The Board of Christian Education (BOCE) and School Administrators give reports and invite feedback at monthly Church Council and quarterly Voters assemblies.
- Mission Statement is publicized and displayed on the agenda of BOCE to guide our decision making.
- Parent Teacher League (PTL) has scheduled meetings, at which time parents and faculty are reminded of the school's purpose and shared goals. [PTL Handbook.docx](#)

Comments:

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:

- [Mission statement laminated posters](#) are displayed in each classroom, hallway, and lunchroom.
- Mission statement is prominent on our [website](#) and [weekly newsletter](#).
- The [painted murals](#) in the school hallway highly reflect the school’s mission.
- Teachers actively align the curriculum with the mission and purpose of the school.
- School events such as the [spring musical](#) proclaim the truth found in God’s Word.
- Our [student handbook](#) outlines the discipline policy and supports a Biblical foundation for discipling.

Comments:

Throughout the school, the purpose is displayed and reflected through the interactions of the staff, students, parents, and church body.

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 job description \(as written in the handbook\)](#)
- [Faculty handbook](#)
- Daily informal staff interactions help serve to mentor and support each other in the mission of the school.
- [Weekly formal faculty meetings](#) intentionally provide an opportunity for mentoring and advising employees both new and experienced.

Comments:

We have this and do this, but our teachers have been in place for quite a number of years. We make a conscious and purposeful effort to keep these at the forefront to support, renew and refresh our mission.

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?

There is no chance of not knowing that you are in a Christian school when you enter our building. Jesus is the focus in every classroom, not only visually but through the daily interactions between teachers and students.

Our school has the Mission Statements posted in every classroom. Its principles guide our staff and students daily.

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.

We do not feel there are any weaknesses that need to be addressed in an action plan at this time.

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:	13
Average: (Total ÷ 4)	3.3

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
- [Minutes from congregational meetings](#) emphasizing the church-school relationship
- List of teachers' involvement in worship, Bible studies, governance, service projects and social activities of the sponsoring congregation(s)
- [Summary of students' church attendance statistics](#)
- [Summary of climate survey](#) results
- [Faculty handbook](#) describing church-school relationship
- Written school evangelism 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.

- [School choirs sing at worship services.](#)
- Pastor assists with classes at the school as needed.
- Pastor relates well, offering services to school families who do not belong to the sponsoring congregation.
- Teachers regularly worship and actively participate in activities of the sponsoring congregation.
- Teachers participate in [district-sponsored conferences](#) and events.
- 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).

The relationship is clearly defined in the [church constitution](#). St. James Evangelical Lutheran School is owned and operated by St. James Evangelical Lutheran Church. The church provides financial support for tuition, salaries, and operations. The church maintains the building facility. Trustees supervise this. The utility costs are divided for accounting purposes at a 60-40 ratio.

St. James Evangelical Lutheran Church works with the school in providing facilities and support for fundraising to cover additional elements of school funding. Zion Lutheran Church of Fraser Township also provides financial and prayerful support of opportunities at St. James Lutheran School. Fundraising efforts are maintained there also. Zion also seats a non-voting representative on the school board to facilitate relationships and communications.

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

The pastor is a liaison between the school and the many congregational organizations of the two congregations that financially and prayerfully support St. James Lutheran School. Pastor serves as the Superintendent of School for St. James Lutheran School, advising, building and

maintaining relationships, advising on financial decisions, and serving as ex-officio on the Board of Christian Education.

Pastor acts as the spiritual leader and actively supports the school. He conducts chapel services that are interactive with the children. He also provides counseling and conflict resolution for the children. Pastor leads children toward responsible Christian leadership by modeling joy, faith, and action in his daily life with the children.

Pastor joins the staff for morning and afternoon prayer, attends staff meetings as he has time, and offers prayerful and active support of the teachers and staff in whatever way is needed.

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

Church attendance is strongly encouraged. Students sing for worship services. The student body puts on an Advent program as part of services, illustrating the promise of the Christmas story. The handchime choir plays for services. SJLS students also present a Bible-based spring musical to which the congregation and community are invited. Students help at congregational events. For example, children bus tables at the annual Harvest Dinner and Pancake Brunch. Older students are invited to participate in youth league activities at both St. James and Zion.

4. How are parents of new students introduced and assimilated into the life of the congregation(s)?

Parents and students are given a tour of the church and school by a current student and teacher. The family is invited to church services. A pastoral visit is conducted. Families are transferred into membership or may take adult confirmation instruction.

5. Describe the way that the school helps its congregation achieve its mission.

The school does outreach within the community: participating in Family Fun Fair, playing hand chimes at area rest homes (pre-covid), and putting on the spring musical. Students are also encouraged to use their musical talents to enhance worship services with voice and instruments on a small-group basis. The school building is used for Sunday School classrooms and open gym events for youth. The school gymnasium is used as an extension of the fellowship hall of the church when needed to seat a larger capacity for dinners and funerals.

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

Our school follows the doctrine and principles of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod. We are supported by the staff of our Minnesota South District Office and use materials produced by CPH for our religious curriculum. We utilize materials created for NLSW. All of our staff members belong to St. James Lutheran or local LCMS congregation. The administrator regularly submits forms to the district. The school faculty attends the MN South Educators' Conferences. The faculty has also attended the national [LEA Convocation](#).

7. Describe how called workers are engaged in the district regarding required conferences, workshops and volunteer efforts.

Called workers attend all required conferences. The school faculty attends the [MN South Educators' Conferences](#). The faculty has also attended the national LEA Convocation. They also seek out workshops with the help of the district office in order to complete the required hours for license renewal.

8. How does the school support synodical missions?

[Weekly chapel](#) offerings are gathered in support of synodical missions such as [LCC Comfort Dog ministries](#) and the Lutheran Heritage Foundation. We also participate each year in the [LHM Gospel Adventures](#) online mission trip during National Lutheran Schools Week, gathering donations towards that year's mission outreach.

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 Registered Service Organization (RSO) status with the Synod.

YES

NO

Identify and list supporting Evidence or Practices:

We are owned and operated by St. James Evangelical Lutheran Church – LCMS

Comments:

SJL is diligent in saying we are a church and school. The [St. James Lutheran logo](#) represents both church and 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.

Highly Functional (4) — This is an area of outstanding strength of the school. It not only meets ALL the benchmarks related to the General Indicator of Success, but is supported by extensive documentation and/or observable practices that exceed expectations related to the indicator. This indicator establishes practices for other Lutheran schools to consider. The Validation Team verifies 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. A majority of the expected benchmarks are not met or addressed with sufficient practices, evidence or documentation. This rating may result in the assignment of Provisional Status. This must be addressed in the School Action Plan.

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’s presence at school](#) and [also](#)
- [Church](#) and [School calendar](#)
- [Advent service participation](#)
- [Cards and visiting congregation shut-ins](#)
- [Bible verse pages given to congregation members](#)
- 3rd graders receive Bibles from the congregation

Comments:

We have no measure in place to demonstrate spiritual support between the two entities except to say that the Holy Spirit is definitely at work! The church has come to the realization that the school is its main mission field. The teachers have also witnessed and experienced the support from our pastor. He continually makes himself fully available, active, and known to the teachers, students, and families of SJL. We are thankful for his support, joy, and wisdom!

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:

- [School music groups playing in church service](#)
- [Student helpers at church dinner](#)
- [Teachers attend Church Workers Conferences](#)
- [Church worship times in newsletter](#)

Comments:

Called and contracted workers in the school participate in congregational worship services and provide support to children participating in services, singing, and playing hand chimes. All faculty attends LEA conferences. School and church calendars provide documentation of scheduled events between the two entities. A teacher is also the church music director/organist. All teachers assist with Vacation Bible School at SJL.

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 and church continually work together towards their common mission to "Learn, teach, live, and proclaim the truth of eternal life through faith in Jesus Christ our Savior as revealed in God's Word." The congregation views the school as its main mission field. Thus there is strong support both spiritually and financially from members of both SJL and Zion.

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.

We're not as effective as we could be in encouraging unchurched families to become part of the church. Monetary challenges are ever-present. The perception from some congregation families is that public schools offer more opportunities and thus do not send their children to St. James Lutheran School. There is a disparity between the St. James families that get a tuition reduction, but Zion families' tuition is paid for by the Zion congregation.

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	4
2A:03	3
Total:	7
Average: (Total ÷ 2)	3.5

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 [Facebook page](#) [Banner](#) [brochure](#)
- [School enrollment policy](#)
- List of parent education programs
- [Constitution, bylaws, organizational and/or flow chart of parent support groups](#)
- [Parent and student handbooks](#)
- [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?

The demographic profile of the school matches the profile of Martin County. According to the latest census statistics, Martin County is 92.5% Caucasian, with less than 1.4% being black, Asian, or American Indian. 3.7% are Hispanic. The school's population is 95% Caucasian, and the rest are Hispanic. Income demographics are harder to determine. Median household income for Martin County is \$53,851 and 13% are considered below the poverty level. One indicator is that 40% of our student population qualifies for free or reduced lunches.

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

St. James Lutheran School reaches the greater Martin County community in a variety of ways. These avenues of outreach include word of mouth, Facebook social media page, bulletins and newsletters, school and church website, church service broadcasts on Facebook, YouTube, and the website. We are also known through various fundraising events, newspaper stories and advertisements, visitations to area assisted-living facilities. An open house is held each year, inviting anyone in the community to come and see what our school has to offer. Home visits and/or in-school consultations are offered for new and potential students.

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

St. James Lutheran School together with Martin Luther High School are the largest employers in the City of Northrop. Northrop is a bedroom community of the nearby city of Fairmont, with most people working out of town. Christian education keeps Northrop "on the map" and the schools work closely with the Northrop city council in maintaining excellent relations. All of Northrop's children enjoy our playground facilities and the Northrop Baseball Association utilizes our ball field for many summer games. The Northrop Fire Department conducts its annual community safety program in our building. Northrop City Hall across the street has been used in the past by our school for temporary storage and classroom space. We are currently using it as our emergency crisis shelter. The school also has good relations with the Northrop American Legion, utilizing their building for school lunches following the church fire. The children recognize and personally thank the veterans in our community.

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

The Fairmont Public School District provides special assessment testing for all K-3 students. It also provides Title 1 services within our facility for any child that qualifies. Special education services are utilized as needed. Health services are provided by the district nurse. Those children not transported by our own bus are able to use the buses from the Fairmont and Truman school districts. Our faculty and administration are comfortable contacting the public school administration regarding any issues. Our faculty has been invited to participate in various programs and in-services.

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

Faculty members are involved as participants, leaders, and volunteers in many ways throughout the greater Martin County Community. These include attending community events such as library activities, community theater productions, cancer and Alzheimer walks, volunteering at town festivals, supporting local fire department activities, participating and volunteering with the community soccer, hockey, football, and baseball programs, and being a member of the Sherburn park committee.

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

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

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:

- [Student Handbook](#)
- [School Menu with statement](#)

Comments:

The purpose, personnel, and program of St. James Lutheran School are centered on the task of assisting Christian families in educating their children. All families in the community are invited to enroll their children in our program recognizing that the religious teachings of St. James Lutheran School will proceed from the confessional standards of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. St. James Lutheran School admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies, admission policies, scholarship and loan programs, athletics and other school-administered programs.

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.

Highly Functional (4) — This is an area of outstanding strength of the school. It not only meets ALL the benchmarks related to the General Indicator of Success, but is supported by extensive documentation and/or observable practices that exceed expectations related to the indicator. This indicator establishes practices for other Lutheran schools to consider. The Validation Team verifies 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. A majority of the expected benchmarks are not met or addressed with sufficient practices, evidence or documentation. This rating may result in the assignment of Provisional Status. This must be addressed in the School Action Plan.

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:

BOCE policy that states we do not turn away students for inability to pay: “500.2 Financial Aid St. James Evangelical Lutheran School operates by faith. No one will be turned away from receiving a Christian education because of inability to pay. Our Board of Christian Education will work with families to make adjustments to the above [as it appears on tuition schedule] where need is evident. St. James Lutheran School provides bussing for some children, and charges an annual bus fee per family for this. It charges a registration fee per child which is over and above tuition. It charges an annual tuition fee per child. The BOCE has also granted a sliding scale for families who have more than one child attending St. James Lutheran School at the same time in grades 1-8. St. James. No child who otherwise would be accepted to admission to St. James Lutheran School will be turned away because of financial concerns.”

Comments:

The student body does match the ethnic, racial and economic diversity of Martin County. This diversity is embraced in that no student –richer or poorer, lighter or darker, town dweller or farmer – is looked down upon or made to feel unwelcome. Efforts are made to communicate effectively with Spanish speaking members. As stated in our handbook, no child will be denied enrollment due to inability to pay. The congregation is aware that their offerings help to support the school’s operations.

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:

- [Food shelf donations](#)
- [Packing for Kids Against Hunger](#)
- Christmas caroling around Northrop
- [Bike-a-thon around Northrop](#)
- [Thank-you baskets and cards to community workers](#)
- [Thank-you letters and art for area veterans](#)
- [Cards made and sent to shut-ins](#) and [older congregation members](#)
- [Booth with activity at Fairmont Family Fun Night](#)

Comments:

St. James Lutheran is involved in many areas of service in the community. Some are planned by the school and congregation and some are planned by individuals and outside groups. The school/congregation has packed meals for Kids Against Hunger, Martin County food shelf donation drives, needed items collection for the Options Pregnancy Center, visitations to assisted-living facilities, and volunteering within the congregation in areas such as choir, VBS, and Youth Group. As listed in the narrative, our faculty members are involved in many community activities and are supported in their efforts by the school.

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 Handbook.docx](#)
- [Minutes from PTL meeting](#)

Comments:

St. James Lutheran Parent Teacher League (PTL) meets once a month throughout the school year. This group not only helps with school projects and events, but gives parents the opportunity to connect with each other.

In the past 5 years, the amount of parent educational opportunities has dwindled. Our parent resource center has become technologically outdated. Some of the resource books were lost and/or misplaced since the fire.

We need to improve in this area.

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:

- MLHS uses our gym
- Martin County Lutheran Coop Volleyball team uses our gym: Fairmont, Northrop, Truman schools
- the local volunteer firemen uses our gym to host Fire Safety Night
- St. Paul Lutheran School Fairmont boys basketball team on which our boys play uses the gym
- Fellowship Hall is rented by community members for family reunions, bridal showers, and other events.

Comments:

St. James Lutheran School is known and respected in the City of Northrop. The residents and city leaders are glad to have us in town. Some confusion arises in the greater community with people assuming that our school and Martin Luther High School are the same. Also having a nearby town with the name of “St. James” leads some people to believe our school is located in that town. We do our best to get the word out that our school is alive and well in Northrop.

Our weekly newsletter is available to anyone that wants a paper copy as well as being available on our school website sjlnorthrop.com. School news to the community is also shared via our Facebook page, which has an unusually high number of followers due to curiosity following the fire.

We have a good relationship with the public schools and our teachers and students have received praise from public school teachers and administrators in the past for our high-quality education, ability to work together, and good relations with each other. Our facilities are available for not only congregation members, but those in the community as well, whether it be the gym for a family reunion, or the ball field and playground for some fun.

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, with the exception of parent education and resources available.

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

The strong congregational support of the school allows us to effectively serve families of need. The congregation has chosen to not only verbalize that we want all children to come, but the congregation has written that no one will be turned away. St. James Lutheran Church firmly trusts that the Lord will provide for their mission and outreach to the "little ones" that Jesus so desired to be served and brought to faith.

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.

We would like to update, replenish, and promote our parent resource library. We would also like to offer more parent-educational opportunities throughout the school year.

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	2
2B: 05	3
Total:	11
Average: (Total ÷ 4)	2.8

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](#)
- [Employee Handbook](#)
- [Schedule of school chapel services](#)
- [Teachers' classroom schedules](#)
- [Parent-school climate survey results](#) [Graphs of survey results](#)
- [Appropriate Christian signage and messaging](#) displayed throughout the school and classrooms
- [Parent newsletters](#)
- [Anti-bullying policies 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.
- Weekly school chapel services are intentionally designed to consciously and systematically strengthen the Christian faith of students and members of the school community.
- Pastoral and school staff work cooperatively to meet the spiritual needs of school families during times of celebration, times of crisis and day-to-day life events.
- Home visits
- 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.

The strong congregational support of the school allows us to effectively serve families of need. The congregation has chosen to not only verbalize that we want all children to come, but the congregation has written that no one will be turned away. St. James Lutheran Church firmly trusts that the Lord will provide for their mission and outreach to the "little ones" that Jesus so desired to be served and brought to faith.

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

Students are encouraged to come to any teacher with questions, concerns, or conversation. Our teachers attempt to establish and keep an open line of communication by way of weekly newsletters, Gradelink emails, text messages, SJL Facebook page, website, phone calls, and in-person. Home visits will be offered each August for new students and any returning students upon request. Teachers are always ready to work with families in times of illness and other family issues in order to do what is best for the student. Teachers, with the support of other staff and parents, provide children with necessary clothing, supplies, and winter-weather items if needed. Throughout the school year our teachers lift our students and families up in prayer.

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

Our students demonstrate respect and love for their teachers through words and actions. Whether it's a hallway greeting, a conversation outside of class, a homework question, a homemade card, or a random hug, our students are quick to demonstrate Christ's love. Student/teacher relationships are also evident in the fact that past students will come back to our school to say hello and to offer assistance wherever it may be needed. Past students have also sent their own children to SJL, even knowing that the same teacher(s) are still there!

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

Legal rights of parents, students, and teachers are protected through the use of various release forms such as marketing permission. The parent handbook also outlines parent and student rights. Our school utilizes the USDA non-discrimination statement as was written before the July 2022 revision.

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

A variety of worship opportunities are provided weekly to meet the spiritual needs of students and their families. These include church services, Sunday school, adult Bible classes, and chapel services. Youth group activities are available monthly, and Vacation Bible School is open to the entire community in the summer. If times arise when families have specific needs, our pastor will work with the school to provide the spiritual, physical, or monetary

resources needed to best help individual families.

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

Open communication in whatever way is best for the teachers and parents is key to maintaining positive relationships. We also hold a Welcome-Back-to-School Night, Parent-Teacher conferences, spring open house, Parent-Teacher League meetings, Grandparents' Day, and end-of-year picnic. These are all intentional ways that we establish and maintain positive relationships with our school parents. We also welcome parent participation on field trips, during athletic events, eating lunch with their child, and in volunteer opportunities such as computer help and listening to children read.

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

Our small staff knows each other well and continually lifts each other up in prayer and support. We are comfortable in the fact that we know we can discuss things with each other, listen to each other, and reach out to each other at any time, knowing that Christ will guide us in our words and actions. We respect each other's gifts, talents, and teaching spaces. We pray that this mindset is passed on to our students, that they may talk, listen, reach out, and respect each other as part of the Body of Christ.

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

The school's [discipline policy](#) is summarized in the School Handbook. Disciplinary measures are administered in a spirit of loving correction. The child is assured that although certain behaviors are not acceptable, he or she is a forgiven and loved child of God.

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 code

[General Discipline Policy](#)

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:

- Staff meets regularly for devotions and prayers.
- [Students of all age levels interact appropriately during chapel, recess, and outreach activities.](#)
- [Church members receive Bible verses and cards from the children.](#)

Comments:

Building a strong positive school community with school families, church members and the Northrop community helps us fulfill our mission to make known the love of Christ by word and deed.

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.

Highly Functional (4) — This is an area of outstanding strength of the school. It not only meets ALL the benchmarks related to the General Indicator of Success, but is supported by extensive documentation and/or observable practices that exceed expectations related to the indicator. This indicator establishes practices for other Lutheran schools to consider. The Validation Team verifies 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. A majority of the expected benchmarks are not met or addressed with sufficient practices, evidence or documentation. This rating may result in the assignment of Provisional Status. This must be addressed in the School Action Plan.

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:

- [Thrivent Action Team project to purchase winter coats and supplies for students.](#)
- Chapel offerings to Lutheran Heritage Foundation and other mission groups
- [Outing to local restaurant](#)
- Class Devotions
- [Class Schedules](#)
- Group prayer
- [Behavior on Report Card Notes](#)
- [Parent Testimonials](#)
- [Classroom Environment](#)

Comments:

Our staff model Christian behavior and expect it from our students. Students pray together in the classroom, have classroom devotions, attend twice-weekly Chapel, pray at mealtimes, and converse with staff. Teachers expect Christian behavior from their students at all times. On occasion, they may ask the pastor and/or colleagues to help with the situation.

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:

- [Teachers and parents donate clothing such as socks, mittens, etc. as needed.](#)
- [Discipline Code](#)
- [Chapel Schedule](#)
- [Class Schedule](#) & [Student Job Chart](#)
- [Spirit Days](#)
- [National Lutheran Schools Week](#)
- [Chapel Family Groups making blankets for parent with cancer](#)
- [Real Essentials behavioral and relational practice](#)

Comments:

Our teachers are available before and after school to speak to parents. The smaller class sizes allow them to know their students and families on a personal level. Our teachers and staff model Christ to their students through daily devotions, praying with them, and through their teaching and social interactions with the students. It is common practice for our teachers to support families going through difficult times by praying for them, making cards, blankets, and helping with other needed items such as meals.

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:

- Staff regularly communicates with parents via phone, email, text, or in person to address any questions or concerns.
- The legal rights of parents and guardians is written into the [Board of Christian Education Handbook](#).
- [Volunteer Training](#)
- [Volunteer Handbook](#)
- [Parent Testimonials](#)
- [Grandparent/Special Person Day](#)

Comments:

Our parents are involved in volunteering for classroom events, chaperoning field trips, and other fundraisers, and sharing special skills. The parents who help with these events are blessed by serving in getting to spend time with their child, learn more about their child’s classmates and other parents chaperoning.

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:

- Staff gathers every morning and every afternoon for prayer and/or brief devotions.
- Sharing of chocolate, coffee, or other treats at staff meetings.
- Donating and serving food at funeral visitations for faculty parents and grandparents who have passed away.
- Empathy and ears ready to listen are always available.
- [Flowers to say thank you for going above and beyond](#)

Comments:

The staff is supportive of one another and strives to see itself as a family. Each plays an important role at St. James Lutheran and we make the best of each teacher’s gifts. The staff meets for staff meetings and devotions and prayer on a regular basis. They also socialize with each other outside of school days, especially at the local Mexican restaurant. They also enjoy hanging out with each other during school community events.

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, we believe the required indicators of success have been met.

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

St. James Lutheran has a positive environment based on Christian education and sound Lutheran doctrine. Our school climate is one of caring and support for each other, and we treat each other as being important members of the body of Christ.

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.

The obvious challenge is working without an official administrator. The tasks are being accomplished; teachers, pastor, and secretary are communicating effectively. School board has been supportive and helpful. In the short term, a lack of administrator is overcomable. In the long term, other options will certainly be considered.

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	7
2B	11
2C	12
Total:	30
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 last audit

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.

Three school board members are from St. James Lutheran Church, the operating congregation. These members are voting members. One member of the board is from our sister and supporting congregation, Zion Lutheran of Fraser Township. This member does not have a vote in decision-making but may hold an office, committee membership, and freely discuss all issues. These members serve for a term of three years. The current pastor of the operating congregation and the current school administrator are seated without a vote on the board.

The board meets the second Tuesday of each month at 7:30 p.m. Meetings are held in St. James Lutheran Church fellowship hall. Responsibilities of the members are as follows: chairperson, transportation director, secretary, and treasurer.

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

The church councils of the respective churches appoint membership to the board for a term of three years. Members rotate responsibilities as they mature in their membership: the most senior board member serves as chairperson.

3. How are governing authority policies and minutes obtained for observation?

Board minutes are distributed to faculty and staff via email and posted in the school. Minutes are available upon request. The BOCE policies are distributed as appropriate in the student/parent handbook and faculty handbook. The manual is available for members to read or look up materials. It will be put on our website in the future, along with the student handbook. Minutes of the board meetings are published within the monthly church newsletter.

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

A designated school board member attends the operating congregation's council meeting and gives a report. Important and pertinent information is also shared in newsletters or parent letters.

5. 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.

- 7th and 8th moved to MLHS creating for them a junior high
- [new laptops](#)

–[new interactive Smart panes for each classroom](#)

–returning kindergarten to a single-grade classroom

–hiring a reading tutor

–keeping school in-person and open during the COVID 2020-2021 school year

6. Explain the process that is used for systematic planning.

Currently, the administrative duties are being jointly performed by a teacher, the pastor, and the church/school secretary. The other teachers also assist, as they have done so in the past. In this time of transition that also includes the movement of grades 7-8 to Martin Luther High School, the joint administration (teacher/pastor) has been working very closely with the Board of Christian Education (BOCE) regarding SJL's strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities going forward.

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**
[BOCE Policy Manual](#)

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:

[SJL Constitution](#)

Comments:

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

YES

NO

Identify and list supporting Evidence or Practices:

[SJL Constitution](#)

Comments:

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:

[BOCE Policy Manual](#)

Comments:

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.

Highly Functional (4) — This is an area of outstanding strength of the school. It not only meets ALL the benchmarks related to the General Indicator of Success, but is supported by extensive documentation and/or observable practices that exceed expectations related to the indicator. This indicator establishes practices for other Lutheran schools to consider. The Validation Team verifies 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. A majority of the expected benchmarks are not met or addressed with sufficient practices, evidence or documentation. This rating may result in the assignment of Provisional Status. This must be addressed in the School Action Plan.

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:

The Student Handbook, BOCE Policy Manual, and the Faculty Handbook is available to peruse. The grievance procedure is clearly outlined in policy and handbook. A board report is given to faculty and staff after the meetings. Board meetings are announced on the school and church calendar. A board member reports to the congregational council meetings and quarterly voters’ meetings.

Comments:

An updated policy book was adopted in December of 2014 and reviewed in 2023. This was the culmination of 18 months of study and work. It is modeled on the public school mandatory policies as outlined by the Minnesota School Board Association with adaptations to meet our private school exemptions and the faith-based mission of our LCMS school. It retains its numerical order to facilitate communication with public school administration and boards over a variety of subjects and issues.

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:

The first section of the BOCE Policy Manual clearly states board roles and responsibilities. Job descriptions are current for all personnel. Administrator’s duties are outlined in BOCE Manual. A monthly report is provided by the administrator or appointed faculty member for review during the BOCE meeting.

Comments:

A plan is in place for formal faculty evaluations performed by an area Lutheran school administrator. The administrator as teacher is evaluated in this manner and informal information regarding teacher/administrator effectiveness is discussed and documented during this formal evaluation. Survey questions are also used as an evaluation tool.

Questions about the administrator’s effectiveness are included in the annual meeting the board has with each teacher individually. No formal observation or analysis is conducted outside these parameters.

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:

Roles and qualifications are defined in the policy book. Responsibilities are defined in the policy book and additional guidance is made available as needed.

Comments:

Board member responsibilities are rotated by experience level with the most senior board member chairing the board and the newest board member having the least immediate responsibility. Pastor mentors new board members and an opportunity for more training and coaching is available.

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:

Staff development assessment is done by administration and teaching staff. Staff development policy is included in the BOCE Policy Manual. A stipend for individual staff development is available for each teacher, and the board has taken responsibility for in-house staff development based on student data and student performance goals. Computers allow for long term integration of technology planning. Board member responsibilities are delineated in the BOCE Policy Manual, and this acknowledges that the day-to-day operation of the school is the responsibility of the school administrator.

Comments:

The administrator works with the BOCE to help identify the needs of the school and facility. Technology updates are a continuing process.

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 the annual 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:

A monthly budget is presented to the board by the church treasurer which includes a historical income and expense column for the month and year to date. The board is well aware of both small and significant changes in the financial situation of the school and the operating congregation. The BOCE also operates its own checking account for the purpose of supporting the following: curriculum adoption, integration of technology, field trips, and various school specific expenses. The BOCE approves the annual tuition and fees. The BOCE is involved in marketing and fundraisers.

Comments:

The school board operates under a “historical” budget that is instituted by the operating congregation. We are allotted those monies which we have needed in the past and additional money for salary increases for teaching personnel are approved by the voters’ assembly. The BOCE sets the salary for the school bus driver and the school hot lunch cook.

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)

We believe the indicators of success are met.

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

We have the support of an operating congregation that believes in the mission of the school within the community. This support allows us to operate progressively while still looking prudently between the past and the future. Although the BOCE does not set the school budget, we operate within a historic budget of which the church approves and supports and which allows the BOCE an opportunity to flourish and support.

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.

Because the SJLS does not function financially as a separate unit from the church, the accreditation budget requirements and financial planning would be considered as a weakness by outsiders, but as we asserted above the financial support and certainty of that support from our congregation is a strength. The BOCE will continue to work closely with the congregation in financial planning for the support of the school. This is an on-going project and as enrollment increases, the BOCE may be able to increase their role in this area.

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	3
Total:	15
Average: (Total ÷ 5)	3.0

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.

At this time we are sharing the responsibilities of this position, primarily between Heidi Koeritz and Pastor Henry with additional input from staff and BOCE.

The faculty meets every morning at 7:35 a.m. to greet each other and to pray. Parents may drop children off between 7:40 and 7:55 a.m. with the SJLS bus arriving approximately at 7:50 a.m., followed closely by the Fairmont and Truman public district buses. The school day begins at 8:00 a.m. and the day ends at 2:45 p.m.: Fairmont school district students, serviced by their bus, must be loaded by 2:40 p.m.

All classrooms begin the day with attendance, lunch count, and devotions. Announcements are made. Teachers may touch base with administration at any time during the day. The pastor is called in on discipline issues that have become a habitual issue, that are a severe infraction, or on which the teacher has questions regarding policy or law. If any teacher must step away from the classroom room for any length of time, the pastor will step in and monitor. Students will self-monitor when the teacher or pastor can deal with the issue in a hallway conference.

A hot lunch is provided and classrooms are dismissed sequentially. Teachers are able to conference during lunch. Recess duty is rotated with teachers dividing work time and recess duty in a rotation.

Chapel services are held on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday mornings at 8:40 a.m.

Teachers monitor their room at dismissal and make sure all students are picked up or sent home. Parents make contact for change of transportation via phone or text messages.

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

Although it is not a written policy, SJLS has maintained a desire to have a licensed administrator as its lead teacher. SJLS job description does require the administrator to hold a valid teaching license, have experience teaching at the elementary level, and have administrative experience.

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

Pastor and Head of School: Attends all School Board Meetings and leads these meetings in conjunction with the Board Chair, oversees partnership, including financial aspects, between SJ and MLHS doing Junior High ministry. Communicates regularly with MLHS principal and staff.

Regularly highlights the importance of school ministry to the congregation, including in sermons. Works with area pastors and principals to foster a county-wide community of Lutheran churches and schools. Instrumental in organizing MLHS/SJ joint Junior High.

Head Teacher: The current head teacher uses leadership skills in the congregation in the role of church music director and organist, Ladies' Eve Circle participation, Harvest Dinner chair, and VBS director. Within the small Northrop community, she helps as the needs arise, one example being coordinating supply donations during a major elevator fire in town.

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

The administrator makes recommendations to the board on matters of curriculum, technology integration, and facility upkeep. Decisions are made by the council and oversight by the respective elders or trustees. Pastor and Head Teacher both participate...

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

Pastor and Head of School: Is the pastor. Bible study, VBS, worship planning, weekly church at two congregations, one owning, the other directly supporting SJ school. Children's sermons. Oversees Sunday School. Leads Bible study at "Northrop Fraser League," a group comprised of members of St. James and Zion. Youth group, Higher Things.

Head Teacher: The head teacher attends church weekly, including all special services. She leads the congregation in song, directs the adult choir, leads and teaches Vacation Bible School, has occasionally led adult Bible studies, has been involved with the church youth group, and attends monthly Bible study as well as Sunday morning Bible study as organ playing schedule allows.

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

Pastor and Head of School: Is a pastor. Preaching, teaching, administer sacraments, outreach to school families. Christian family with kids in Lutheran schools; family devotions; visiting the sick and shut in with the Gospel; frequently in the community in clerical attire. Prays for congregation, members, etc.

Head Teacher: Regularly witnesses to her faith, the value of Lutheran education, and the Good News of Jesus by way of social media posts, SJL social media posts and events, and even wearing school-themed shirts.

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

Within the school, teachers team teach when the need arises and also take turns supervising recess or gym class in order to allow someone to make parental calls, visits, or take care of other professional needs. Teachers also allow students to mentor across grade levels and between rooms.

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

Pastor and Head of School: SLED 2023. Wife (Laura) encouraged to seek degree and licensure in teaching through Concordia St. Paul. Attends Region IV principal meetings.

Head Teacher: Attends annual conferences, puts together the annual staff development plan, assists staff in finding webinars and other development opportunities that will help meet the needs of the students, researches new curriculum needs.

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

Administration and teachers consult frequently with each other regarding best practices in the classroom. Collaboration freely abounds. Formal observations were not conducted in the 5 years the previous principal was at SJL. Plans will be made to reinstate observations and evaluations, preferably from an outside source. Pastor has begun observations September 2023. A major priority for development plan.

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

Pastor and Head of School: Conducts chapel, teaches junior high religion at MLHS-SJ joint junior high. Frequent phone and face-to-face interactions with parents and families regarding concerns; frequent mentor, counselor to teachers and other staff regarding professional and personal concerns. Present and supportive of teachers during meetings with parents. Oversight of school grounds (example: ensuring that enough wood chips were added to school playground.)

Head Teacher: Is available at Parent Teacher Conferences and at scheduled conferences throughout the year, including IEP meetings. The head teacher greets and meets students and parents in the morning as daily routines allow. Her cell phone is published for the families, and she is available to staff and families through calls or texts throughout the school day and when needed outside the school day. Families, staff, and students may also reach her by email.

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

Pastor and Head of School: Attends Pastoral conferences and Region IV principal meetings.

Head Teacher: Attends required MN South conferences and workshops.

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
[Principal 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:

See narrative.

Comments:

Within our current administrative model involving both the pastor and veteran teacher, there is an extremely strong commitment to Lutheran education and is completely dedicated to the school ministry of St. James Lutheran.

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.

Highly Functional (4) — This is an area of outstanding strength of the school. It not only meets ALL the benchmarks related to the General Indicator of Success, but is supported by extensive documentation and/or observable practices that exceed expectations related to the indicator. This indicator establishes practices for other Lutheran schools to consider. The Validation Team verifies 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. A majority of the expected benchmarks are not met or addressed with sufficient practices, evidence or documentation. This rating may result in the assignment of Provisional Status. This must be addressed in the School Action Plan.

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:

Pastor and Head of School: <https://locator.lcms.org/worker/1151653>

Head Teacher: <https://locator.lcms.org/worker/15467>

Comments: Pastor holds an MDiv. and an STM from Concordia Theological Seminary and is participating in SLED 2023.

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:

[BOCE Policy Manual.docx](#)

Comments:

It is the policy of the BOCE to release the administrator for half day per week. This can be adjusted as needs arise.

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 effectively communicates and works together with local public school officials.
- 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:

[Communication with LSEM and Fairmont Elementary School](#)

[-Fairmont School District email example](#)

Comments:

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:

The administrator provides recommendations for expenditures in areas of technology and curriculum and facility improvement.

[Church Financial Report 2023](#)

[School Financial Report 2022-2023](#)

Comments:

The operating budget of the school is controlled by the church council. The church treasurer has the responsibility for managing the budget, bookkeeping, and safeguards. The council has the responsibility of developing the budget based on the historical budgeting method. The administrator fulfills those responsibilities of the job description, and those responsibilities above that are within the scope of the role as administrator at SJLS: as such, we contend that we are operational.

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

<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:

[LEA Membership](#)

[Staff Development Plan](#)

Comments:

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)

Not exactly.

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

Two heads are better than one. Pastor and Head Teacher get along great.

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.

For church and family: who is the school leadership?

The budget has been an ongoing discussion, negotiation.

Pastor is taking steps to learn the ropes of school admin, but is not there yet.

Leadership in staff development is emerging but not fully present.

Staff oversight/evaluation is emerging but not fully present.

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	2
Total:	13
Average: (Total ÷ 5)	2.6

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	15
3B	13
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.

All teachers are required to have a four year degree and teach at the level appropriate to their licensure.

2. What is the current student-teacher ratio?

SJLS currently has a 10:1 student/teacher ratio.

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

The faculty is active in seeking professional growth in their areas of interest and in areas that would benefit certain age levels and the SJL student body as a whole. A yearly staff development plan is presented based on ITBS results, classroom observations, teacher licensing requirements, and availability of topics.

All faculty attend the Minnesota South Educators' Conference. Every three years, distance and financing permitted, the faculty attends the LEA Convocation. Each faculty member receives CPR-AED training every two years and Intruder Safety Training every 3-4 years. Other opportunities on various topics are available via invitation from Fairmont Area Schools, webinars, and in-school presenters.

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

Staff meetings are held weekly at 3:00 p.m. on Tuesday. They are used primarily for evaluating activities and events for the year to date, planning for upcoming events, sharing concerns and positive observations, and making changes and adjustments for bettering programs. As time allows, we may also utilize these meetings for discussion of educational articles and research. Twice daily prayer time before and after school also allows for quick announcements and questions.

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

Individual staff members lead devotions and prayer in their classrooms. Teachers bring their own experiences into their discussions and lessons during religion. Teachers also demonstrate Christian compassion through ministry to community members that are suffering from illnesses: cancer benefits, visits to retirement communities, sending cards to classmates' families, and the like. Teachers also lead devotions at the Parent Teacher League meetings.

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

The hiring of called teachers follows synodical guidelines for called personnel. Contracted staff are hired after an interview pending the completion of a background check. Notices for staff are first advertised within the congregation through the church bulletin and newsletters, then through the LCMS area churches, and final advertisements are put in the local newspapers. Candidates are required to send a resume, three letters of recommendation and/or three contacts we may call for recommendations, and a cover letter to the church. These applications are reviewed by the hiring committee. Candidates chosen for an interview are contacted. Short-term substitute contract candidates are interviewed by the pastor and administrator. Candidates for permanent positions are interviewed by the BOCE, pastor, and administrator. If the position is for administrator, a teacher representative is included in the interview.

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

Each faculty member has a laptop computer in their classroom. Every classroom has an interactive white board and projector to enhance whole class instruction. Laptop computers are available within the computer lab and for individual student use in the classroom. There are also 4 Chromebooks “floating” between the classrooms and students as needed. In 2019, the school obtained a Google G Suite for Education and since that time teachers, staff, and students have been learning how to use Google Classroom and its features.

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

Our non-rostered teachers are informed of the teachings and doctrine of the LCMS through attendance at an LCMS church, the colloquy program, or conversation with the Pastors.

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](#)

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:

Comments:

We only recently came to the realization that call papers and long-term signed contracts were lost in the fire. We are in the process of replacing them.

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.

Highly Functional (4) — This is an area of outstanding strength of the school. It not only meets ALL the benchmarks related to the General Indicator of Success, but is supported by extensive documentation and/or observable practices that exceed expectations related to the indicator. This indicator establishes practices for other Lutheran schools to consider. The Validation Team verifies 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. A majority of the expected benchmarks are not met or addressed with sufficient practices, evidence or documentation. This rating may result in the assignment of Provisional Status. This must be addressed in the School Action Plan.

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 are actively enrolled in the colloquy program.
- 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

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

Identify and list supporting Evidence or Practices:

[Current teaching licenses](#)

Comments:

All teaching staff are dedicated to the purpose and mission of the school. Two of the teachers are not on the LCMS roster and are not currently in the colloquy program. One teacher is not licensed in the area she is teaching, but is pursuing that license.

The teacher files are incomplete in regard to call papers and other documents due to files being lost in the fire of 2016. We are reconstructing files for each teacher that will contain verification of call forms and current contracts. They will also include current teaching licenses.

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:

- LEA Conference programs
- [LEA membership card](#)
- Professional development events

Comments:

We realize that in the past 5-6 years we have lapsed in our efforts to observe and critique teachers in the classroom. Improvements in this area will be a part of our action plan going forward.

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:

[Salary Scale](#)
[faculty handbook](#)
[relicensure evidence](#)
[BOCE Policy Manual.docx](#)

Comments:

Our current student to teacher ratio is 10:1.

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:

[SJLS Staff Handbook.docx](#)

[BOCE Policy Manual.docx](#)

[Volunteer policies and training](#)

Comments:

Our preschool teacher does not hold a current MN state teaching license, but is currently enrolled in the required education online classes through Concordia University St. Paul.

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)

In process.

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

SJLS staff has shown remarkable flexibility and resilience during the past 10 years they have worked together. The staff is enthusiastic about trying new practices in technology and curriculum. They are constantly seeking ways to improve the educational experience of each child. Four of the five faculty members are veteran teachers with 15-40 years experience. They know their individual strengths (and weaknesses) and work together to support each other in and out of the classroom.

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.

Two challenges were made evident in this process. One being the lack of formal observations of staff members. The other being that not all staff members are rostered and our preschool teacher does not have a MN state teaching license, although she is working towards that goal.

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:	9
Average: (Total ÷ 4)	2.3

STANDARD 5: TEACHING AND LEARNING

The school's curriculum, instructional design and assessment practices guide and ensure teacher effectiveness and student learning.

Overview

Learning expectations for schools are profoundly different today than even a decade ago. Schools must be institutions of creativity, imagination and innovation. Key to success is the investment of time, thought, energy and resources toward desired educational outcomes.

Student learning requires the integration of a well-developed curriculum and instructional design supported by intentional and ongoing assessment. When teaching, learning and assessment are correctly aligned and students are engaged, learning results. In this way, Lutheran schools accomplish one of their primary objectives.

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 [Image Image Image](#)
- 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 [Image](#)
- Examples of student use of technology as a learning tool [Image](#) [Image](#) [Image](#)
- Peer or mentoring opportunities and interactions [Image](#) [Image](#) [Image](#)
- Recognition of teachers regarding instructional practice
- Examples of improvement to content and instructional practice resulting from collaboration
- Student-led conferences
- [Summary of test score data](#) [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 (e.g. state mandates, Common Core curriculum, local public school curriculum, "Integrating the Faith," standardized test objectives and results analysis, etc.).

Consultation is made with the local elementary schools and Martin Luther High School when reviewing textbooks. We also informally communicate with other area teachers and Lutheran teachers on an ongoing basis. How curriculum development and instructional strategies reflect the newest research in how the brain learns and retains knowledge is also a factor. Some of our curriculum materials are aligned with the common core, but this is not as great a factor as that the reading materials reflect the tenets of scriptures in humanitarian aspects and do not contradict scripture in matters of faith.

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

- Accelerated Reader online reading supplemental program was reinstated to allow students to strive toward individual reading goals.
- new Abeka social studies curriculum has helped students gain an interest in our country's history through stories of events, people, and traditions all from a Christian perspective
- new "[Musicplay Online](#)" music theory/appreciation curriculum. This guided online program allows non-music teachers to use music in their classrooms in addition to choir.
- new [Deep Space Sparkle](#) online art concepts/appreciation curriculum.
- [Typing.com](#) keyboarding programs implemented
- Ag Magazine and [Minnesota Ag in the Classroom](#) curriculum matrix utilized
- Student gmail accounts via Google Classroom allows teachers and students to work collaboratively
- REAL Essentials curriculum and instructor (health, social, emotional, safety) has improved the overall relationships between the students
- Zoom used for absent students on a needed basis

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

Teachers use a wide variety of instructional strategies that vary across the grades and the areas of study, thus it is difficult to identify a single predominant method used most often by teachers. Some of the methods include: Inquiry (Science learning and labs, using manipulative objects to discover patterns and develop strategies, exploring phonics/spelling patterns), Groups and partner work (within math groups, reading groups, partner activities, exploration of science topics), Direct Instruction (Teacher explains and students respond), Cognitive Modeling (Teacher

thinks out loud/shares patterns of thinking processes during religion, reading, and literature), Scaffolding (Breaking down questions and learning tasks into segments ranging from simpler to more complex in science and social studies), Open-ended problems (leading discussions for brainstorming), Guided practice then independent work (Teacher models and explains, provides guided practice, then allows students to practice independently, applying knowledge and skills especially in the area of math), and Guided Reading (students read, discuss, and respond to instructional level text under the guidance of the teacher in reading/literature, science, and social studies).

A strength in our school is the flexibility of our teachers. They are flexible and understanding and know the children with whom they work. This allows teachers to recognize learning needs and adopt teaching strategies accordingly. Children at all levels receive hands-on activities, opportunities to work in groups and independently. Children also receive teacher-centered instruction and personal time with their teacher, as the need arises.

The younger students receive instruction which is more hands-on and exploratory in nature. They have table top work that centers on literacy activities and small motor skill development. They participate in daily free-play and social interaction. They also participate in interactive whiteboard activities which include identification, drag and drop activities, read-alongs, sing-alongs, and large motor movement and rhythm.

Building on this firm foundation, the first and second grade teacher uses a variety of teaching methods in order to best help this age group transition to more structured methods later. This multi-dimensional approach includes teaching through auditory, visual, hands-on, and digital methods. Any given lesson may include listening, looking at pictures or videos, using manipulatives, incorporating movement, using interactive white board activities, and verbally communicating with each other.

The middle school students benefit from an environment which is centered on student success. Through use of the interactive white board and other tools, students can self direct their review of concepts and information. The teacher also uses it for instruction. Students have an opportunity for cooperative learning and work as teams often.

Though primarily teacher centered instruction takes place in the junior high classroom, the students use guided reading activities, create models for self instruction and classroom instruction, conduct inquiry based experiments in science, and research topics for classroom presentations. Students are taught technology applications through classroom projects such as geography powerpoint presentations, literature newsletters, and graphs and data analysis in math. Student work is given purpose by allowing them to teach from their work to their peers and other classrooms. Work is filed for use the following year as examples and instruction.

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

Teachers communicate with each other often in regards to sharing information about the needs and/or successes of any particular student or class, whether in-coming or out-going. This information is shared during individual conferences with each other as well as during school faculty meetings. Teachers meet formally and informally to review student achievement and student levels of students passing from one room to the next room as they progress through grades. These teachers may exchange information on strategies tried which do not work and those that do work. As students grow, teachers may brainstorm solutions to new problems—good or poor—to remediate, motivate, or enhance.

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

When delivering content we use visual, kinesthetic, and auditory modes. We present information using large group instruction, small group instruction, video, slide presentations and music. We utilize 1 to 1 pull-out sessions when necessary.

Students are encouraged to show their learning in a variety of ways as well. Assessments may include drawing, technology, writing, pictures or graphics. Students are often given chances to teach other students what they have learned as well. This gives them the opportunity to be the teacher and understand what they have learned even more.

To accommodate learners who might struggle with testing we use a plethora of strategies. These include but are not limited to: extended testing times, alternate testing times, having tests read to them, take home tests, and answering questions verbally.

Here are some additional accommodations:

- Title 1 services through Fairmont School District and LSEM
- speech services via Zoom through Fairmont School District
- special education services through Fairmont School District
- individual reading goals vary based on student abilities (remedial or advanced)
- IXL online math program allows students to work at their own personal levels
- Reading Accommodations include Approaching Level, On-Level, Beyond Level
- Some flexible seating is available.
- Provide alternate settings in which to work, such as the resource room, hallway, or outdoors.
- Provide noise-canceling headphones.

6. Describe the process of recording and reporting learner progress to parents and/or caregivers.

- Using the online Gradelink Student Information System, parents are given login information. This allows them to view and monitor student progress at any time during the year.
- Scheduled parent-teacher conferences are held in the first quarter and third quarter. Other conferences may be requested as needed by parents or teachers. Progress reports are sent home frequently. Detailed report cards are sent home quarterly. In the spring, ITBS scores are sent home before the conference and are discussed at the conference with parents.

Cumulative student files house the original report card, individual data and assessments, and the annual ITBS score, as detailed above.

7. Describe the 21st century methodology in place at the school and elaborate on how it impacts student learning (e.g. global awareness, financial and entrepreneurial literacy, civic literacy, health literacy, environmental literacy, etc.).

Global awareness is taught through participation in the annual online mission trips sponsored by the Lutheran Hour Ministries and supporting international agencies with our chapel offering projects. In addition, we often try to invite speakers to lead chapel who come from the international Christian community such as missionaries and Lutheran Bible Translators. Through these and various other ways we learn to value and respect those of a different heritage so we are able to share God's love in a sensitive way that acknowledges differences and embraces our commonality.

Awareness of the global environment is cultivated through field trips to the local apple orchard, working farms, and online field trips through Minnesota Ag in the Classroom. Student learning is personalized as they experience nature and respond with enthusiasm and responsibility for God's incredible creation. At various age levels our rural students may also have the opportunity to visit and experience larger population areas by touring the Minnesota Science Museum, Children's Museum, State Capitol building, Minnesota History Center, and even Valley Fair.

Civic literacy is an integral component of our formal Social Studies curriculum and is extended with experiences such as instruction in proper flag etiquette; service learning such as packing food for Feed My Starving Children, collecting and delivering food to Heaven's Table Food Shelf, compiling shoeboxes for Samaritan's Purse Operation Christmas Child, and inviting parents into the classes to teach about their roles in the workforce and community. Our classrooms are all equipped with interactive white boards and projectors, and this allows us to connect with world events and the newest science or information immediately. It also brings context to discussions on responsible citizenry and civic duties. We have also been blessed to have video conferences with people in other countries.

Chapel families help the children to learn leadership and discipleship skills. Visits to area nursing homes allow for intergenerational experiences. Financial literacy is taught through "The Secret of Handling Money God's Way" workbook in the older grades.

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

The interactive Smart panel is used by both teachers and students during instruction and also by students for review. Students also use the computer laptops in our lab for projects, typing, research, and supplemental reading and math programs. Students are able to do oral presentations using powerpoints, posters, and tri-folds. Teachers use many types of manipulatives and real-life objects in math, science, social studies, and reading that help

students access tactile and sensory learning to develop connections and memory. In addition, students develop pride in their writing by sharing them in church mailboxes, bulletin boards, and writing to the shut-ins. Students enjoy sharing their written stories orally in class. Teachers use a variety of purchased or created paper worksheets and guided reading materials. Science lab materials are also used such as microscopes, beakers, litmus paper, and other items to explore scientific concepts. There is also a science supply of actual nature items such as rocks, minerals, shells, pine cones, grains, seeds, nests, quills, preserved spiders, etc. Students may also explore engineering and build a prototype of something they have designed.

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

Students have access to a wide variety of age-appropriate books, both fiction and nonfiction, in the classroom library. The nonfiction books include children's dictionaries, small encyclopedias, atlases, and other informational texts. Bible story books are readily available. Manipulatives such as counters, clocks, shapes, word cards, flashcards, geometric shapes, plastic coins, etc. are within the children's reach. The computer lab is used for learning enhancement, and parents are given access to math and reading online activities so their children may also practice concepts at home. Students type spelling words. Students research on the internet, and type research papers at several levels. Older students have been taught to use google operational words to research events and topics through a search engine in a different country to get perspectives that are not western and not our own. Students study vocabulary and use a thesaurus to enhance conversation, improve writing, and increase literacy.

Field trips are used to enhance and reinforce the students' learning experience. Field trips may be used before curriculum is introduced to provide background, such as History Fest, or as a culminating event, such as the trip to the Minnesota Zoo after researching an animal.

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

The teachers use every available opportunity to connect the content of any form of instructional material to God and faith. Whether it be the wonders of His creation during science, God's organization and order during math class, His blessings of life on earth during social studies, or the beautiful privilege of learning to read His Word, everything points to Jesus. The materials available in the classroom serve as tools for learning, but more importantly as tools for faith-building.

As curriculum becomes more complex, teachers focus on assuring and identifying God's role in the events of history, even as we explore man's corrupted nature in relationships with each other. While studying science, each teacher is aware of the student's need to understand that science does not contradict God's Word but supports God's design and the consequences of sin.

11. Describe how the school provides for access to the Internet.

As noted above, each classroom has an interactive white board and wireless connection to the school network. The school has high speed internet access through Federated REA. Each teacher

has a classroom laptop. There are 20 laptops and 3 Chromebooks available for student use both in our computer lab and in the classrooms. Google Classrooms, internet, and other educational programs are programmed into each computer. We provide guest wifi access to the internet that is password protected.

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 curriculum is developed for every grade level for religion, mathematics, science, reading, language arts, social studies, 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, indicating clearly when subjects (activities) are taught and during what periods.
- A chart is prepared illustrating the percentage of each school week allocated to each subject (activity), at each level, including a comparison with state guidelines.
- Analysis of the results of standardized tests administered for each grade level 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:

- [Daily Schedules and percentages](#)
- Site Visit Observations
- [Curriculum List](#)

**Comments:**

The teaching of Christian faith is evident at St. James Lutheran. First are the daily prayers, offered at the start of the day, at meal times, and at the end of the day. All students are taught the Lord's Prayer.

Secondly our Christian faith is shared through daily lessons. SJL uses the Concordia Publishing House religion curriculum in the classroom. Every student grades 3-6 receives a student Bible to read and use during school time. Younger students use Arch books and also retell and act out Bible stories. At all grade levels there is memory work and students attend chapel services twice weekly.

Outside of religion class and chapel, Christ is shared through music classes, chime choir, and the annual school musical which is always Bible-based. In core subjects, discussions of what God has done and wants for us are sprinkled throughout, whether it be when discussing the history of the world, how people are created differently, being thankful for healthy bodies, or how and why physical objects look the way they do.

Finally, our Christian faith is evident through the behavior that the teachers model and also in the behaviors that are explicitly taught to the students. Every classroom has numerous Christian symbols, such as posters, crosses, Bibles, photos, visible as a constant reminder of our core values. When there is conflict between peers, Christian values are incorporated into finding a solution and all people - students and faculty - are taught and encouraged to ask for forgiveness from one another.

5:02* The written curriculum is developed and is implemented for religion, mathematics, science, reading, language arts, social studies, 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:

- Narrative
- Observation
- [Teaching Schedules](#)
- [Percentage Chart of Time Taught](#)
- [Curriculum Review Schedule](#)
- [Scope and Sequence](#)

Comments:

Curriculum is reviewed annually and we attempt to stay on a rotating schedule of updating as needed and as expenses allow. Schedules are reviewed yearly to make sure subject areas are covered appropriately. We use our ITBS test scores to review areas we need to improve.

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.

Highly Functional (4) — **This is an area of outstanding strength of the school.** It not only meets ALL the benchmarks related to the General Indicator of Success, but is supported by extensive documentation and/or observable practices that exceed expectations related to the indicator. This indicator establishes practices for other Lutheran schools to consider. The Validation Team verifies 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.** A majority of the expected benchmarks are not met or addressed with sufficient practices, evidence or documentation. This rating may result in the assignment of Provisional Status. This must be addressed in the School Action Plan.

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:

- [ITBS Test Scores](#) and [Analysis](#)
- [Curriculum Schedule](#)
- Curriculum Maps
- [Report Cards](#)
- [Teacher Observations](#)
- Narrative

Comments:

The administrator, in cooperation with other teachers, actively seeks out feedback from Martin Luther High School faculty and administration regarding our students' strengths and weaknesses. We also communicate with public schools as needed, based on where our students may attend. Student data is analyzed and shared with teachers for the improvement of instruction.

5:04: The school’s Christ-centered, written 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:

- [Teaching Schedules and Percentages](#)
- [Family Handbook](#)
- [Employee Handbook](#)
- [Report Card Samples](#)
- [Curriculum Review Schedule](#)
- Student Records
- Narrative

Comments:

In particular, the One in Christ curriculum provides a platform for student development of essential life skills such as Bible study, prayer, memorization of Scripture passages and Luther’s Small Catechism, participation in the worship and fellowship life of the church, and using one’s gifts in service to God and

others. The study of literature and follow-up writing assignments give students a platform to develop thoughtful responses and provide ongoing opportunities for students to ask questions that develop critical thinking skills and generate solutions to problems that utilize these higher level thinking skills. Math curriculum offerings provide large numbers of applications with problem solving requiring math skills and knowledge. Science and social studies both offer suggestions and opportunities for students to be challenged to use their knowledge and interest to understand and make positive changes in the world around them. Art lessons supply ideas to help students analyze student work in order to determine whether or not the art displays characteristics emphasized in the instructions. Music classes expose the learners to sacred and secular music that enhances life experiences and provides them with a foundation for development of personal enjoyment and contribution to a performing arts group. Physical Education classes give students knowledge and skills that they may use for a lifetime to remain active and physically fit by using instruction that utilizes walking, running, games, and team sports to develop an active, positive, and healthy lifestyle.

The primary reason we offer a curriculum that meets or exceeds state expectations is that we instruct the whole child in the context of family, school, and community. The faith formation component is embedded in our curriculum. Follow-up with teachers and administrators at secondary schools affirms our graduates' ability to succeed at the next level.

Teachers often have opportunities to teach the faith and attest to the growth of faith in students throughout the various subject area discussions and activities.

5:05: Teachers use a wide variety of 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 socially responsible global citizens.
- Classroom instruction involves a variety of strategies and settings that address diverse student needs and accommodates 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) 3 Operational (3) Emerging (2) Not Evident (1)

Identify and list supporting Evidence or Practices:

- Observation
- Narrative
- Field trips [Image](#) [Image](#) [Image](#) [Image](#)
- Variety of classroom activities [Image](#) [Image](#) [Image](#) [Image](#)
- Outside work [image](#) [Image](#) [Image](#)
- Chapel Family activities [Image](#) [Image](#) [Image](#)

Comments:

Teachers use a wide variety of instructional strategies that vary across the grades and the areas of study.

Some of the methods include:

- Inquiry (experiments, manipulative objects to discover patterns and develop strategies, exploring phonics/spelling patterns)
- Cooperative learning (math groups, reading groups, partner activities, exploration topics)
- Direct Instruction (teacher explains and students respond)
- Cognitive Modeling (teacher thinks out loud/shares patterns of thinking processes)

- Scaffolding (breaking down questions and learning tasks into simpler segments)
- Gradual Release of Responsibility (teacher models and explains, provides guided practice, then allow students to practice independently, applying knowledge and skills especially in the area of math)
- Stations (self-guided learning with teacher monitoring)
- Guided Reading (students read, discuss, and respond to instructional level text under the guidance of the teacher)
- Small group work (reporting to the large group, practicing and demonstrating accountable talk and group problem solving skills)
- Using games to teach problem solving skills and logical thinking
- Field trips to enhance educational learning

Utilization of these varied strategies helps to engage the learners. Making learning relevant for them is another engagement strategy. Having fun while learning also leads to more academic success.

To meet diverse student needs we present the material in many ways to help everyone to be a successful learner. (video, audio, pictures, movement, small groups, or large group instruction)

We also set goals based upon individual students. We observe students and track their needs. Sometimes a student benefits from being in a smaller group or perhaps they can work on a computer program that utilizes activities to meet specific needs. Some students need extending testing times, alternate testing times, or even take home tests. We have also utilized mental health breaks, walking laps for the mileage club, the option to work outside, mentoring and collaboration with other students. Some students need accommodations in time or the number of problems to complete. Some students prefer to respond verbally or some prefer to write or type their response. Some learning can happen kinetically through stations or drawing.

All students are given the chance to serve others through some type of service learning. Students made cards of encouragement for policemen, fire men, health care workers, and many other essential workers. Birthday wishes, feel better soon, and holiday cards were made to share with others. Bible verse artwork was handed out to church members and sent to shut-ins. Every child designed a page that created a special book to show others how much we care about them. We volunteered at Feed My Starving Children, collected items for the local food shelf, and provided Christmas gifts for Operation Christmas Child. The school also participated in cleaning up our local community.

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:

- [Staff development](#)
- Observation
- Narrative
- [Calendar 2022-2023](#)
- [Board Minutes](#)
- [Red Cross CPR training](#)
- Teachers can share content via the Google Suite

Comments:

Teachers regularly participate in staff development activities designed to provide professional growth, improve instruction, and enhance student learning. This starts with regular staff meetings every Wednesday after school. Prayer and short meetings are held every morning and afternoon. This year, we have also scheduled half day teacher professional development workshops.

Our small staff makes it very conducive to interacting with colleagues to work together, help each other improve and share responsibility. Informal conversations either during work times, before school, after school, lunch at the teacher table, or during recess monitoring provides ample opportunity for this. Colleagues regularly seek each other out regarding certain students, situations, questions, and/or new methods.

We also attend LEA (Lutheran Education Association yearly conference/workshops) or MEA (Minnesota Education Association) workshops once a year.

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 is integral to curriculum, instruction, assessment and a tool for teachers to personalize, enhance and improve instruction.
- Student technology skills are sharpened and advanced through the integration of technology into the learning process.

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

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

- Technology Class Schedule
- Laptop policy and use
- Technology plan
- Observation

Comments:

Using technology to teach

The use of technology is evident in the classroom. Teachers take students on virtual field trips or use small clips of videos to enhance the teaching of a theme. Faculty also use Google Classroom as a way to create, distribute, track and grade assignments.

How to acquire tech skills

There are various ways to acquire the technical skills needed in the classroom. Faculty members can attend workshops, learn how to connect digitally, socially and spiritually in the 21st century. There are also STEM conferences, Google conferences and webinars and continuing education courses. Self-education is also important, whether it be through YouTube videos, or trying out new apps. Faculty also rely on each other and congregational experts to help learn and improve their technology skills.

Clear and intentional planning and protocols

Nothing is used or viewed with technology that doesn't enhance what we are learning. St. James Lutheran continues to update its technology inventory and improve its technology scope and sequence along with it. Teachers discuss what applications the students use so students are prepared for their next step.

Technology is integral and used as a tool for teachers

Starting in third grade, students will use Google Classroom on available laptops or tablets so they learn how to use it. Using Classroom allows for assessment to be done more quickly which enables teachers to modify their instruction if a concept is not being grasped by the students. It also provides an easier way for absent students to stay in step with their classmates. At the middle school level, Google also offers other Google apps as a way for students to complete assignments and projects.

The great value of technology is that it can enhance student reception of content and curriculum materials. By integrating different technologies, faculty are able to reach students and to establish real life examples that make sense.

Student technology skills are sharpened and advanced

At a very basic level, students learn about how to care for the laptops and tablets, how to follow directions, how to use a touchscreen, a touchpad, and a mouse, and also how to live responsibly in a digital world. Starting in third grade, the teachers introduce students to different websites and programs so they can implement the practices in other subjects during projects and assessments. Students must learn not only to use platforms, apps and tech interfaces but also how to use them responsibly in a Christ-centered way.

5:08: Curriculum, instruction and assessment are regularly monitored and adjusted systematically in response to multiple assessments of student learning and examination of professional practice.

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 individualize instruction for student success.

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

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

- [Iowa Basic Skills tests](#) and [analysis](#)
- [Curriculum Review](#)
- [Report Cards](#)
- [Parent Teacher Conference schedule](#)
- Narrative

Comments:

Through standardized testing, information is gathered on the efficacy or lack thereof in current instructional practices. There are a multitude of assessment methods used to track student progress, including tests/quizzes, physical demonstrations, active questioning, posters or interactive assignments, information observation and one on one checks for knowledge. There are continual assessments throughout the year - for preschool students, St. James Lutheran teachers will do one-on-one observational assessments with each preschool and kindergarten student. Starting in kindergarten all students take the Iowa Basic Skills assessments to track progress.

Student learning is monitored by faculty through the gradebook, Gradelink, and using Google classroom to quickly keep track of assignments and provide feedback. In addition to quarterly report cards, faculty do more consistent weekly assessments to make sure students continue to grow. For parents, Gradelink allows them to assess grades and see what assignments may be missing. As a whole, parent-teacher conferences are held if there is a concern about the student's progress. Finally, as students progress through the school, records are kept and provided to the next teacher so she/he can be aware of the needs of their incoming students.

As a small school we are able to see student growth during inter-age group activities and use daily staff interactions to be able to see the students from different perspectives. As noted above, students take standardized tests and data from these tests are compared to daily work to determine if a learning issue needs to be addressed. Using summer meetings between teachers, faculty are able to evaluate students as a whole and give upcoming teachers helpful hints to incorporate the next year for specific students.

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?

Strong Christian teachers make a connection with their students that lead to success. Teachers are flexible and willing to work hard to implement new strategies to increase student performance. Teachers continually collaborate and interact in order to provide students the best learning environment possible.

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.

Curriculum mapping is not evident, although combining years of experience and lesson planning would probably help make some sort of map a reality. This must be addressed in the school action plan.

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	2
5:05	3
5:06	3
5:07	3
5:08	3
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
- Admissions counselor position
- Policies related to student matriculation
- Policy for preparing volunteers
- Athletic handbook
- Samples of student cumulative records
- List of counselors referred by the school
- Evidence of background checks for staff and volunteers
- List of first-aid materials
- Wellness plan
- Volunteer handbook
- Admissions counselor position

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

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 and students who show an interest in or inquire about enrollment at SJLS are invited for a tour and consultation. Room arrangements, curriculum, and student expectations are explained. The family may take a registration packet with them which includes the enrollment student information form and tuition schedule; all other pertinent forms are also in the packet. If they choose to enroll, they will complete the Gradelink student information questionnaire. After enrollment, a tuition payment plan is generated. Financial aid information and alternative payment plans can be made with the pastor. Hot lunch eligibility forms for subsidy are explained and turned in to the Food Services Director.

Students in continuous enrollment at SJLS are registered on the first Monday in August. All forms may be filled out and turned in that day. The registration fee and first month's tuition may be paid that day. Again, alternative payment plans and/or student aid may be discussed with the pastor.

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

The school nurse is available upon request to discuss health issues and counsel students on coping strategies, stress relief, and other items. She makes contact with the staff and with student parents when other counseling is relevant. The school nurse and our pastor have a list of licensed counselors and services available in the immediate area.

Our pastor will also provide two counseling sessions with a student. However, if he feels more counseling is needed, parents will be notified to arrange further counseling with a professional counselor.

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

Parents and students may have a pre-entrance conference with the classroom teacher. A visit to the child's home is offered by the classroom teacher. Parents will meet all teachers on registration day. An open house/orientation is done the Sunday before school begins. On this day, concerns may be brought to the teacher's attention, general questions may be raised, and the student brings supplies in and unpacks them at his/her desk or cubby. The parent and student find the student locker. Generally, if there are new items or announcements that were not available at registration, these will be addressed verbally or through a newsletter.

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

Teachers explain to the students the expectations of the next level. These expectations are then modeled, practiced, and hopefully mastered throughout the school year. In our small school environment we frequently interact with the other classrooms which make the students eager and excited to participate in the activities seen in the various classrooms.

The 5-6th grade students have a “Step-Up” day of fun and exploration at Martin Luther High School which they attend as a class.

The teachers review the rigor of curriculum and interview former students about their progress at the high school.

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

We participate in the Region IV Track and Field Day at Fairmont in the spring. We also help sponsor and organize the Region IV Fine Arts Festival and Science Fair which is held at Martin Luther High School. In addition to these regional activities, boys and girls can participate on a cooperative basketball and/or volleyball team. Our upper grades participate in two full day co-educational softball tournaments and a full day soccer tournament.

Our school attends the Children Museum, Fairmont Pioneer Museum, Brown County Museum, Science Museum of Minnesota, Zoo, Rad Zoo, History Fest, Rendezvous, Heritage Acres, Environmental Awareness Day, Fire stations, hospital/ER, Apple Orchard and various parks. We participate in Mileage Club, Walkathons, and have an annual Bike-a-thon. We are also guests at Martin Luther High School for curriculum based learning events such as a historical presentation by war veterans.

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

Students mentor each other within the classroom. Students may have peer tutoring activities, small group cooperative learning projects, and/or literacy circle responsibilities. Students help in the classrooms below their level by listening to younger students read, prompting or tutoring younger students in math, helping students develop computer literacy and research skills, and also reading Accelerated Reader tests to younger children.

Students also participate in music and demonstrate their faith by singing and playing hand tones in chapel, church, and health care facilities. They also put on an Advent program for the congregation and a scripture based musical for the community. Our students distribute handwritten Bible verses to church members, make cards for shut-ins, and have made appreciation baskets with cards for essential workers.

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

Expectations of student behavior are clearly explained in the student handbook. The faculty handbook also has the expectations for supervision of students and appropriate discipline steps. Faculty discuss supervision of students and expectations for student safety in the building and on school property during faculty meetings as the need arises.

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

We do not have before or after school care programs. We do, however, remain with all students until they are safely picked up.

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

We do not have any child care services that are part of, or affiliated with, the school.

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

We do not have a child care facility.

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

Tornado Drill	9.6.23	10.4.23					
Fire Drill	9.21.23	9.22.23					
Medical Lock Down Drill	10.13.23						
Intruder Lockdown Drill							

Fire drills are at approximately 10:00 am. Tornado drills are at 1:00pm.

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

1. Call 911. Do NOT leave the victim unattended.
2. Notify CPR/first aid certified persons in the building of the medical emergency.
3. If possible, isolate affected students/staff members.
4. Initiate first aid if trained.
5. Do not move victims except if evacuation is absolutely necessary.
6. Designate staff person to accompany injured/ill person(s) to hospital.
7. Notify the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the affected student or family of the staff member.
8. Office staff notifies parents of all involved students. Parents who wish to pick up their children may do so.
9. Teachers deal with grief counseling as appropriate in their classes.
10. Responsible staff member prepares an accident report and submits it.

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

Fairmont Area Schools' school nurse provides the annual blood-borne pathogen training. Staff also has CPR/First Aid training with a licensed CPR trainer every two years. Parents complete a medical information form each year for the nurse's file. If there is an allergy or medical condition all classroom teachers are informed: all teachers have lunchroom, recess, and other supervision duties with our students. The medical forms are on file in the School Office. Parents complete a medical administration form for a child who needs to take either prescription or over the counter medication during the day. Prescription administration is signed by the physician. Medication is sent to the school in the original bottle, and the teacher keeps it and distributes it according to the instructions on the medical administration form.

Each classroom has a first aid supply kit and a complete first aid closet is located in the main hallway. The custodian is also trained in the correct way to clean, disinfect, and dispose of bodily fluids.

Teachers have also received online Vector Training for child abuse, neglect, and students experiencing homelessness.

Teachers are also made aware of cyber-bullying and cyber safety issues. Students are supervised when working in the computer lab to assure their safety.

Asbestos inspections are conducted as required by law. Our last inspection was Spring of 2023. The inspector began a new file once we realized all old files had been destroyed in the fire.

14. How are student health records maintained and used?

The Fairmont Area Schools district nurse is responsible for all health issues, immunizations records, and documentations for our school. The school nurse tracks and reports all outbreaks to the state health department. The school nurse makes contact with all parents regarding issues with immunizations or records. The school nurse is available upon request. During this time she could speak with students and staff on any health needs. She has also offered to share information about specific health topics. Health records are secured in the student permanent file.

15. Describe the food services provided.

A hot lunch program, as well as a breakfast program, is administered under the Minnesota State Food and Nutrition Service. The cook is trained and certified. The kitchen is inspected as required by law. Commodities and purchases are made and delivered through a contracted service approved by the Federal Hot Lunch Program. Students are eligible for free and reduced lunch. These applications are turned into the Food Service Director.

When a child brings lunch from home, a refrigerator is available if needed. All children wash their hands or use hand-sanitizer before snack and the lunch meal.

Tables are washed with soap and water and allowed to air dry after the hot lunch meal. Plates, silverware, and dishes are washed, sanitized, and air dried according to the proper procedures of the federal hot lunch program training.

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](#) See Student and family handbook

[Crisis emergency plan](#)

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:

- Emergency Drills (Fire, Tornado, Intruder)
- First Aid & CPR Training
- Intruder Training

Comments:

The school's crisis emergency plan needs to be updated.

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.

Highly Functional (4) — This is an area of outstanding strength of the school. It not only meets ALL the benchmarks related to the General Indicator of Success, but is supported by extensive documentation and/or observable practices that exceed expectations related to the indicator. This indicator establishes practices for other Lutheran schools to consider. The Validation Team verifies 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. A majority of the expected benchmarks are not met or addressed with sufficient practices, evidence or documentation. This rating may result in the assignment of Provisional Status. This must be addressed in the School Action Plan.

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:

[BOCE policy handbook](#)

Comments:

A more thorough written procedure for handling students’ emotional, social, and psychological needs could be delineated, although we follow the current procedures of the public district. Our school nurse services are exceptional, but we can not rely on such a valuable and exceptional working relationship in the future if personnel changes, funding is reduced to the public district, or other obstacles arise.

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:

- Lutheran School sports co-op.
- [Music opportunities](#)
- [Chess](#)
- [Bike-a-thon](#)

Comments:

The amount of after school activities has been altered due to the relocation of 7th and 8th graders to Martin Luther High School. We are actively working on adjusting and increasing the opportunities for our younger students.

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:

- Vision & Hearing Screening (from monthly Parent Letter)
- First-aid kits in ready to use locations/medical supplies in office
- Record of Emergency Drills
- Internet Security Firewall
- Acceptable Use Technology Policy
- Mandated Reporter Training
- Bus Safety

Comments:

Fairmont Area School nurse provides all health and safety documentation for our children and most training for our faculty and staff. CPR certificates are on file for all teachers. BBP training is filed with the state and is on file in the school office. Drills are recorded. Volunteers have their background checks done. BOCE has an internet use policy.

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:

- Kitchen inspection
- Food service manager license
- Newer commercial kitchen
- Monthly menu

Comments:

Our school food service manager does a wonderful job of preparing meals that the children enjoy. She also follows federal guidelines, keeps the food service and storage areas clean and inspected, and has a good relationship with the students and faculty. Our hot lunch program always rates high on the list when children are asked what they like about our school! Any child bringing lunch from home has full access to the kitchen refrigerator.

Our new commercial kitchen has been a blessing to the congregation and the community.

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?

Our student safety policies and procedures are a strength at King of Kings. Whether it is food, cleanliness, social, emotional, psychological or physical health, we focus on the health of the whole student.

The family-oriented atmosphere is a strength.

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.

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)	3.0

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. The school is both a place and instrument for learning. As a place for learning, the facilities help children grow spiritually, physically, mentally, socially and emotionally. As an instrument used in the learning process, the facilities demonstrate principles of beauty, 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, etc.)
- Regularly scheduled maintenance
- Daily cleaning and sanitizing
- Safety inspections as required by local mandates

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).

The SJL school building consists of 4 classroom, office, computer lab, resource room, two bathrooms, and a furnace room. The attached gymnasium leads to the fellowship hall, kitchen, another classroom, an office, restrooms, and church narthex and sanctuary.

Outside the school, SJLS has a well-maintained baseball diamond, a playground, and a cemented area which is used for basketball, four square, and other games.

2. Describe how general maintenance and repair of the physical facilities is ensured.

During the custodians' daily cleaning duties, they inspect the facility. If there are any issues that need attention, they take the appropriate steps to resolve them. This may include a conference with the staff, immediate action, or action by the Board of Trustees.

3. Describe how the school ensures that it complies with laws, health and safety requirements and building codes.

We have an asbestos inspection timely as required by law. We have maintenance and improvements done on the building by licensed and bonded electricians, contractors, and plumbers. We have had no violations of building codes or health and safety requirements brought to our attention.

4. Describe the maintenance and cleaning schedule of the facility.

[Custodian job description and duties](#)

5. What is the relationship of the school administrator and faculty with the custodial staff?

There is open communication. If there are any problems, the administrator and/or staff are able to leave the custodians a note or speak to them in person. The custodians are also willing to share any concerns they may have. The custodian and administrator conference on any on-going problems or problems that will require long term planning: for example, urinals. The custodian is also willing to take on urgent responsibilities, such as Covid disinfecting and BBP protocols.

6. What part of the physical plant has been changed in the last three years?

The last three years have seen little change. However, following the church fire in 2016, there have been many changes:

- new paint in all classrooms
- new flooring and wall covering in kindergarten classroom
- new gym floor and bleachers

- new fellowship hall, offices, and restroom completion
- new commercial kitchen completion
- new sanctuary

7. What long-range plans are in place for ground and site development?

Several large trees are to be removed due to emerald ash borer.

8. How are students protected from outsiders before, during and after school?

Students that are dropped off are observed or escorted into the building by the parent. Students who ride the bus are observed by the bus driver until they are safely inside the building. Doors to the school and church are locked at 8:00 a.m. and remain locked until dismissal. After school, teachers accompany students outside and remain with them until the bus or parents pick them up.

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 floor plan](#)

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.

YES

NO

Identify and list supporting Evidence or Practices:

[Custodian cleaning schedule](#)

[Asbestos inspection schedule](#)

[Fire Extinguisher Inspection](#)

Comments:

7:02* Facilities fully conform to all applicable laws, including health, safety and building codes.

YES

NO

Identify and list supporting Evidence or Practices:

[Asbestos Report](#)

[Food Service Inspector Report](#)

[Lift Inspection Report](#)

[Fire Extinguisher Inspection Report](#)

Comments:

Our new kitchen is now fully commercial and has been used for both church and community events as well as school lunches.

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.

Highly Functional (4) — This is an area of outstanding strength of the school. It not only meets ALL the benchmarks related to the General Indicator of Success, but is supported by extensive documentation and/or observable practices that exceed expectations related to the indicator. This indicator establishes practices for other Lutheran schools to consider. The Validation Team verifies 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. A majority of the expected benchmarks are not met or addressed with sufficient practices, evidence or documentation. This rating may result in the assignment of Provisional Status. This must be addressed in the School Action Plan.

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 supports and provides for the integration of technology and learning.

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:

- [–5th/6th classroom](#)
- [–1st/2nd classroom](#)
- [–Preschool classroom](#)
- [–Kindergarten room](#)
- [–resource room](#)
- [–3rd/4th classroom](#)
- [–Fellowship Hall as Classroom Extension](#)
- [–gym](#)

[-computer lab](#)

-wifi throughout the building

Comments:

Since we've been in the process of changing and adjusting our administration, the school office is not used as much as it used to be. We have transitioned more to the church office, especially since the secretary has taken on additional school duties.

Moving one classroom to the fellowship hall has opened up what we've dubbed the resource room. This allows a space for Title work, reading room, library and science storage.

Fiber optics will soon be installed, thus greatly improving the speed and reliability of our internet service.

7:04: Physical facilities provide specific (crosses, signs, etc.) and non-specific (attractive, adequate, etc.) 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 Christian flag flies alongside the American flag at the same entrance.
- 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 is a witness 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:

[-murals and posters](#)

[-Classroom cross](#)

[-outdoor signage](#)

Comments:

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 and athletic field have fences or other restraints to prevent students from entering streets or adjoining property and to prevent vehicular traffic during school hours.
- 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 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:

- School zone signs are at each end of property
- Teachers accompany students who need to cross the street after school
- New wood chips have been laid on the playground
- entry sign with instructions and doorbell are in place

Comments:

Doors are locked during school hours. Any person entering must go through the church entrance by either calling the office or ringing the doorbell.

We do not have fencing around the playground. Our playground is used as a community playground all summer and at other times that the school is not in session. One side of the playground is an agricultural field, one side is our school building and property and a third side is an empty lot. The final side is bordered by a residential street. Two teachers are on duty while students are outside. The area will not be fenced in.

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 fire of 2016, although stressful and seemingly tragic at the time, has since resulted in many improvements to the facility. The large, well-lit fellowship hall allows space for an extra classroom plus room for all-school activities and projects. The new commercial kitchen with additional storage space has given us the opportunity to serve school lunches to Martin Luther High School. We were able to install new flooring and bleachers in the gym.

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.

The potential for growth is limited due to space. The physical size of the classrooms is adequate for the current student population, but overcrowding is a concern.

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)	3.0

IDENTIFICATION OF POWERFUL PRACTICES

Identify and provide an explanation of any practices (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*.

Practices associated with General Indicators of Success that are rated as “highly functional” (4) by the school have the potential for identification as a *Powerful Practice* when the practice is transformational and replicable.

NLSA seeks to identify and share unique practices that set a school apart and 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:

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

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: 108 S James Street, PO Box 315, Northrop, MN												
LCMS District: MN South												
Administrator: Rev J Henry & Mrs H Koeritz												
Date of Most Recent NLSA Validation Team Visit: 2015												
Accreditation Year	<input type="checkbox"/>	Preliminary	<input type="checkbox"/>	Year 1	<input type="checkbox"/>	Year 2	<input type="checkbox"/>	Year 3	<input type="checkbox"/>	Year 4	<input type="checkbox"/>	Year 5
Standard & Indicator Number	Self-Study Concerns & Strategies				Target School Year	Responsible Party	Action Taken	School Year Addressed				
2B:04	Lack of educational opportunities for parents and parenting resources				2025	Admin						
3B:02	Admin has Master’s Degree in Education					Admin						
3B:05	Admin not involved in budget/bookkeeping					Admin						
3B:06	No formal program of staff supervision by admin				2025	Admin						
4:02	Not all teachers are eligible for rostered											
4:03	Existing program for staff evaluation not currently implemented/has lapsed				2024	Admin						
5:04	The curriculum is not based on established state or national standards											

	An after-school care program would greatly benefit our student body and families				
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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 School Action Plan must be included with the final submission of the school’s Self-Study to the District Accreditation Commission.

NLSA 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				