# National Lutheran School Accreditation
# Validation Team Report

*Revised September 2023*

**Trinity First Lutheran School**

Minneapolis, MN

May 1-3

Matthew Meier-Captain

Melissa Gruenes

Sean Martens

Kevin Wilaby

**NLSA**
**National Lutheran School Accreditation**

# FOREWARD

Becoming accredited is a strenuous process. The school and its administration are highly commended for their efforts in this ongoing accreditation process. The preparation and the arrangements for the Validation Team were well done. It is the hope and prayer of the members of the Validation Team that the enclosed document is accurate and helpful for the continued improvement of **Trinity First Lutheran School**.

The members of the Validation Team express sincere gratitude to the administration, staff and community of **Trinity First Lutheran** for the opportunity to serve on the Validation Team and for the kindness shown during the visit.

**Trinity First Lutheran** is a good program. This was reflected not only in the Self-Study Report but also in the comments and observations of the Validation Team. The school effectively represents the Christian faith and values not only to its children and families, but also to the surrounding community.

The Self-Study Report is carefully written and includes specific recommendations to be considered seriously by the school and all constituents of **Trinity First Lutheran School** and its sponsoring congregation, **Trinity First Lutheran Church**. Not every suggestion must be followed, however, each is to be considered and addressed in follow-up reports, specifically the annual ongoing cumulative report submitted to the school's district office.

The report was written collaboratively and edited by the Validation Team with minor editing completed by the Team Captain. The report reflects the talents and expertise of all team members. Wherever possible, specific and practical recommendations were made to help address concerns.

The Team Captain, Team Members and the Consultant pledge their continued support and assistance in the implementation process and look forward to hearing about and/or seeing the progress of the School Action Plan.

May the Lord richly bless the staff and constituents of **Trinity First Lutheran** so that with the power of the Holy Spirit they might continue to proclaim His Gospel ever more effectively to the children and families they serve.

In His Service,

**Matthew Meier**
Validation Team Captain

# DISCLAIMER

## Limitations on the distribution, use and scope of this document.

It is the official intent of the National Lutheran School Accreditation Commission that this report is considered a privileged document, to be submitted by the Team Captain of the Validation Team directly to the administration of the school. The distribution of the report and its availability for public consideration rests solely in the hands of the school administration.

Neither the Team Captain nor the other members of the Validation Team are authorized to release any of the information contained in this report without the approval of the administration of the school.

The primary purpose of the Validation Team was to examine the educational ministry of the school, including curriculum, learning materials, student needs and interests, staffing and facilities. The Validation Team assessed the effectiveness of the total school program in meeting the educational objectives and National Lutheran School Accreditation Standards.

It is not the purpose of the Validation Team to evaluate individual teacher performance. The use of this report as an official assessment of any staff member's professional competency is a violation of the process and is not the intent of the school evaluation. Such use is inherently invalid since at no time during the Validation Team Visit was the team concerned with the evaluation of individual teacher performance.

The Validation Team and the Validation Team Report assist the school in its own process as a guideline for continuous growth. Neither the team nor the report is presumed to be the authority for validating any claims regarding health, safety or personnel issues. Such matters are the sole responsibility of the school.

# Validation Team Member Biographic Information

*Matthew Meier serves as the principal at Rochester Central Lutheran School in Rochester, MN. He earned his BA from Concordia University Chicago and his MS from Illinois State University. Prior to leading RCLS Matthew has served Lutheran schools and congregations in Illinois and Texas. He has captained and served on multiple NLSA teams and has multiple times served as a School Leadership Development mentor. Matthew enjoys assisting Lutheran schools in reaching their goals for excellence and connecting them with the unchurched on their campus and in their community.*

*Melissa Gruenes serves as a teacher at Trinity Academy in Hudson, WI. She is a graduate of Concordia University - St.Paul with a BA in Early Childhood and Elementary Education, along with Kindergarten certification. She has had the opportunity to teach birth-5-year-old classes, kindergarten and currently 4th grade. Melissa has served as Trinity Academy's Administrative Assistant and is the current Staff Development and Student Success Team Coordinator. She takes great pleasure in nurturing and guiding Concordia University student teachers, not only preparing them to excel as Lutheran educators but also empowering them to share their love for Christ. In 2023, Melissa was nominated and received the School Leadership Endorsement (SLED) from the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod, developing her leadership skills and preparing her for opportunities to lead in Lutheran schools. She is very excited to have the opportunity to be a part of this team.*

*Sean Martens serves as the Education Executive for the Minnesota South and North Districts of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. He has been a Lutheran school principal, instructor, and coach in Minnesota, Nebraska, and Nevada at the elementary, high school and college levels. He earned bachelor's degrees in chemistry and biology, secondary education, and master's degrees (2) in curriculum and instruction and administration from Concordia University, Seward, Nebraska. Martens is a certified Reconciler, a 2003 graduate of the School Leadership Development (SLED) program and has been a SLED program mentor. Martens has served as a Consultant, Team Captain, or team member on more than 50 accreditation teams and serves on the Minnesota South District Accreditation Commission. Martens also serves on COGNIA (AdvancED) accreditation teams and is ELEOT certified.*

*Kevin Wilaby currently serves as Principal of Mayer Lutheran High School (Mayer, MN). He holds a BA from Concordia College in Nebraska and a MS in Educational Leadership from Saginaw Valley State University in Michigan. Kevin has been serving in Lutheran schools for 36 years including Martin Luther High School (Northrop, MN), Valley Lutheran High School (Saginaw, MI), and North Lutheran High School (Northglenn, CO). Currently Kevin serves on the Minnesota South District Accreditation Committee and has worked with schools on the NLSA accreditation process as both a consultant and a team member.*

# REPORT SUMMARY

## Overall School Performance Level

| Standard | Rating Total | Possible Score |
|---|---|---|
| Standard 1 | 11 | 16 |
| Standard 2 | 32 | 40 |
| Standard 3 | 28 | 40 |
| Standard 4 | 10 | 16 |
| Standard 5 | 18 | 24 |
| Standard 6 | 11 | 16 |
| Standard 7 | 9 | 12 |
| Total | 119 | 164 |
| Average (total ÷ 41, rounded to hundredths decimal) | 2.90 | 4.00 |

## The Validation Team's Overall Impression of the School

Trinity First Lutheran School is clearly a fine school that provides quality Christian education to students in their community and beyond. The school has maximized their allotted learning space in a consistently innovative manner.

It is noteworthy that the community of Trinity First Lutheran School realized many years ago the need to restructure their ministry approach as the community and the membership of the congregation began to change. Today families of the communities are introduced to Jesus because Trinity First is an beacon in the community. The school is funded primarily through a vast donor network that allows students to attend Trinity First while paying a modest annual tuition.

## Outstanding Strengths

- A unified staff cares for, supports and assists each other.
- Dedicated teachers, staff and administrators lead the ministry of TFLS.
- Staff attend to the individual needs of students and challenge students to be their best.
- The ministry team embraces students and parents unconditionally.
- School personnel have built relationships with families through their Parent Participation program and their Parent Education program.
- The school has built a volunteer and donor network that allows TFLS to make it possible for families to afford to send their children to school.
- TFLS has an administrative succession plan in place.

## Major Deficiencies

None

**School Shepherd Nomination:**

| X | **YES** |

| | **NO** |

**If, yes, please list the Name and contact information for the pastor:**
**Pastor Jon Kuehne   612-871-2353 Ext 19   jkuehne@trinityfirst.org**
**Accreditation Recommendation**

We the members of the Validation Team recommend:

| **Accreditation in Good Standing** | X |  | **Provisional Accreditation** |  |  | **Denying Accreditation** |  |

If the recommendation is for Provisional Accreditation, please provide a bulleted list of deficiencies:

for **Trinity First Lutheran School** of **Minneapolis, MN**

**Signature of the Team Captain**

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# TEAM FINDINGS

The Team Findings section presents the Validation Team's evaluation of the NLSA Standards and Indicators. It also identifies Strengths, Concerns and related Recommendations that were identified by the Validation Team through a review of the school's prepared documentation along with observations and interviews that were conducted during the visit.

## Accreditation Standards and Indicators

Standards define what's important for schools to be successful. In an accreditation self-study process they provide the educational community with the opportunity to evaluate school's effectiveness, identify strengths and concerns and plan for intentional and continuous improvement. They establish benchmarks that schools must achieve through intentional planning and assessment. The NLSA standards are a compilation of expectations related to what is most important for Lutheran schools. They have been refined and adjusted and align closely with the research-based standards that have been prepared by secular partner accrediting agencies. They allow Lutheran schools to use the very best that the educational community has prepared while staying true to the mission of sharing Christ with children and families.

This section contains an evaluation of each NLSA Accreditation Standard and Indicators, conclusions related to strengths and concerns that were identified by the visiting team and evidence and practices that led to the team's conclusions. Indicators are evaluated and rated individually by the visiting team using a four-level performance rubric. The Standard Performance Level is the average of the indicator scores for the standard.

> **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.

## Survey Responses

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

Parent Survey administered with a minimum 20% response rate, and analyzed per Self-Study Part II Page 10:

| X | YES |
| --- | --- |
|   | NO |

Comment:
Rate of response was 58%

Teacher and Staff Survey administered with a minimum 80% response rate, and analyzed per Self-Study Part II Page 10:

|   | YES |
| --- | --- |
| X | NO |

Comment:
Rate of response was 67%

Students Grade 1-3 Survey administered with a minimum 40% response rate, and analyzed per Self-Study Part II Page 10:

| X | YES |
| --- | --- |
|   | NO |

Comment:
Rate of response was 82%

Students Grades 4-12 Survey administered with a minimum 40% response rate, and analyzed per Self-Study Part II Page 10:

☒ YES

☐ NO

Comment:
Rate of response was 70%


Board of Education (or similar body) Survey administered with a minimum 80% response rate, and analyzed per Self-Study Part II Page 10:

☒ YES

☐ NO

Comment:
Rate of response was 83%

# Standard 1: Purpose

**Are required evidentiary pieces for Standard 1 prepared and in good order?**
Standard 1 Required Evidence*:
Final School Action Plan from previous accreditation

| X | **YES**

| | **NO**

| | N/A if it is the first accreditation

Strategic Plan if applicable and currently utilized by the school

| X | **YES**

| | **NO**

Written purpose/philosophy/mission statement

| X | **YES**

| | **NO**

| | **N/A**

**Does the school comply with the Required Indicators for Standard 1?**
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.

| X | **YES**

| | **NO**

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

| X | **YES**

| | **NO**

| General Indicator of Success | Operational Benchmarks | Sources of Evidence (please provide bulleted list utilizing: observation, Handbook, Interview, specific document, etc.) | Self-Study Rating | Team Rating |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1:03** School leadership (administration and governing board) uses the mission statement as the foundation and reference for all planning. | • The school's purpose was developed in accordance with governance policy.<br>• The school's purpose is engaged, aligned, and enacted with its vision, values, school goals, learner outcomes and student activities.<br>• The school's mission statement supports and aligns with the congregational mission statement. | Website<br><br>Interviews<br><br>TFLS Vision Casting document | 3 | 3 |
| **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. | • The school's purpose is communicated effectively to staff, students, and stakeholders.<br>• The school regularly evaluates and reviews the alignment of purpose, vision, values, school goals, learner outcomes and student activities. | August Retreat Notes<br><br>Interviews<br><br>School Board Training slides and documents | 3 | 3 |
| **1:05** The school's purpose is displayed and reflected in school activities and in the teaching/learning environment in classrooms. | • The school's purpose is displayed in each classroom and in the hallways.<br>• The school's purpose is readily seen on the school's website. | Website<br><br>Parent Handbook cover<br><br>Advisory Board Handbook<br><br>Interviews | 3 | 2 |

| General Indicator of Success | Operational Benchmarks | Sources of Evidence (please provide bulleted list utilizing: observation, Handbook, Interview, specific document, etc.) | Self-Study Rating | Team Rating |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | • 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.<br>• School events, curriculum and discipline are aligned with the school's mission statement and purpose and promote a positive teaching/learning environment. | | | |
| **1:06** New employees are informed about the school's purpose and its appropriate engagement. | • New employees are given an orientation packet and have an orientation meeting with the school administrator.<br>• New employees utilize mentors to assist them in learning about the school's purpose and how to carry it out.<br>• The school's purpose is outlined in the job description for each employee. | August Retreat Notes<br><br>New/Recent teacher interviews<br><br>Mentoring Checklist | 3 | 3 |
| **Total** | | | 12 | 11 |
| **Standard One Overall Rating**<br>(Total ÷ 4, Rounded to the Nearest Tenth) | | | 3 | 2.8 |

**What is the overall Validation Team rating for Standard 1?** 2.8

**Did the Validation Team change any ratings that were assigned by the school?**

| X | YES

| | NO

**If YES, what was the justification for changing the rating?**
While the mission statement appears in a variety of documents and locations, it is not clearly displayed within the school building or classrooms. It also does not appear that a wholistic common language incorporating the mission statement exists.

**What strengths have been validated by the team in this area?**
The ministry team of Trinity First is all "pulling together" in the same ministry direction and working together to implement its mission and vision. There is noticeable passion for sharing the grace of Jesus with the students and families of Trinity First.

**What concerns have been validated by the team in this area?**
While a general understanding of the ministry purpose and direction exists, the TFLS community seems to be missing an opportunity to incorporate mission statement common language by not routinely displaying the current mission statement, especially within the building. The mission statement appears to be underutilized as a tool.

**What recommendations does the team make for concerns that were not addressed by the school in its Self-Study process?**
During the next August mission and vision review by TFLS, it is recommended that a published mission statement, whether current or new, be prominently posted in all classrooms and public areas. It is also recommended that at the August mission and vision review, methods would be discussed of how to assimilate the mission statement into the common language of the ministry.

**Please list all Validation Team concerns that the school must add to their Final School Action Plan for Standard 1:**

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

## Standard 2: Relationships

**Are required evidentiary pieces for Standard 2 prepared and in good order?**

Standard 2 Required Evidence*: Written nondiscrimination statement

☒ YES

☐ NO

Standard 2 Required Evidence*: School discipline code

☒ YES

☐ NO

**Does the school comply with the Required Indicators for Standard 2?**

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

☒ YES

☐ NO

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

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

☒ YES

☐ NO

| General Indicator of Success | Operational Benchmarks | Sources of Evidence (please provide bulleted list utilizing: observation, Handbook, Interview, specific document, etc.) | Self-Study Rating | Team Rating |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **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. | • The pastor is acknowledged as the spiritual leader of the whole congregation, including the school.<br>• The pastor demonstrates that he is the spiritual leader of the school and congregation.<br>• The congregation provides spiritual support for the school and its students.<br>• Pastor(s) and school staff regularly demonstrate support for each other's ministry. | Constitution<br><br>Chapel Services<br><br>Baptisms<br><br>Church Outreach plan<br><br>Pastor leads Bible study for parents, morning devotions, daily closing service, and teaches Bible courses. | 3 | 3 |
| **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. | • Students participate regularly in congregational life through planned activities available and coordinated with the congregation.<br>• School staff members are actively involved in worship and congregational life in their parish.<br>• The school and congregation plan and work together on behalf of families who do | Choir singing at other congregations<br><br>Administrator attended MN South professional development seminar.<br><br>Parent Family Night Program (Bible Study and Parent Education)<br><br>Pastor Interview<br><br>Administrator Interview | 3 | 3 |

| General Indicator of Success | Operational Benchmarks | Sources of Evidence (please provide bulleted list utilizing: observation, Handbook, Interview, specific document, etc.) | Self-Study Rating | Team Rating |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | not have an identified church home or who do not attend church regularly.<br>• The school supports LCMS missions.<br>• Called teachers participate in required district conferences and events. | | | |
| **2B:02** The school's student population reflects the ethnic, racial and economic diversity of the community in which it is located. | • The school studies the community demographics and compares the information to the demographics of the student body.<br>• The school embraces and celebrates the demographic diversity of the students it serves and the surrounding community.<br>• The school has developed ways to enroll students from the community who do not have the economic resources to support tuition-driven enrollment. | Demographic information in Required Responses #1.<br><br>Remind communication app allows communication to be translated into the native language of the families.<br><br>Parent Participation Program (Parent Handbook)<br><br>Culture dress-up days are held.<br><br>Pastor interview | 3 | 3 |
| **2B:03** The school promotes and encourages the involvement of its teachers and students in community activities. | • The school seeks ways to involve its students and teachers in service to the community. | Parent Bible Studies (Parent Handbook)<br><br>Parent education nights (Parent Handbook) | 3 | 3 |

| General Indicator of Success | Operational Benchmarks | Sources of Evidence (please provide bulleted list utilizing: observation, Handbook, Interview, specific document, etc.) | Self-Study Rating | Team Rating |
|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | • Staff members are encouraged and provided with opportunities, planned by the school and its congregation, to participate in community activities and service organizations.<br>• Staff members are engaged in community service. | Family Fun Events<br><br>Chapel Offering Initiative<br><br>Narrative<br><br>Love Our City<br><br>Student Worship Teams<br><br>Students sing at other churches |  |  |
| 2B:04 The school has an active Parent-Teacher Organization and/or other parent support groups. | • The school sponsors educational opportunities for parents and provides a wide variety of parenting resources.<br>• Support groups (i.e., 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. | Parent Education Program<br><br>Parent Participation Program<br><br>Trinity First 2023-24 Family Night Schedule<br><br>Kinder Family Nights<br><br>Game Nights | 3 | 3 |
| 2B:05 The school is known, respected and maintains a positive perception in its community. | • The school is known and respected in its community.<br>• The school regularly and frequently shares | Saturday Homeless Ministry<br><br>School, classroom newsletters, and Stand in the Gap newsletters | 3 | 3 |

| General Indicator of Success | Operational Benchmarks | Sources of Evidence (please provide bulleted list utilizing: observation, Handbook, Interview, specific document, etc.) | Self-Study Rating | Team Rating |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | information with its constituents.<br>• Good relationships exist with the local public schools.<br>• School facilities are available, when practical, for use by appropriate community groups and activities. | Interviews (regarding Title funds)<br><br>Connections with police and fire departments<br><br>Narrative (Food shelf and community clean-up) | | |
| 2C:02 The school's Christ-centered ethos is visible and evident to visitors. | • Students demonstrate love for others in response to Christ's love for them.<br>• Teachers' care for student needs is prominently enacted throughout the school.<br>• Students worship together daily, either in each classroom or in a school-wide appropriate worship experience with other students.<br>• Classroom environment, hallway decorations and posted classroom projects demonstrate respect for teachers and peers.<br>• Student behavior is appropriate to encourage growth and to maintain | Teacher staff orientation<br><br>Parent Handbook<br><br>Staff Devotion List<br><br>Classroom devotions<br><br>Open House<br><br>Fall Festival<br><br>Christmas Program<br><br>Musical<br><br>Survey results<br><br>Parent Teacher conferences<br><br>Daily closings<br><br>Narrative<br><br>Observation<br><br>Interview | 3 | 3 |

| General Indicator of Success | Operational Benchmarks | Sources of Evidence (please provide bulleted list utilizing: observation, Handbook, Interview, specific document, etc.) | Self-Study Rating | Team Rating |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | the school's chosen teaching/learning environment. | | | |
| 2C:03 Teachers and staff members recognize, value and respect the needs of students. | • Teachers demonstrate love for all students in Christ.<br>• Teachers attend to the individual needs of students.<br>• Teachers integrate faith principles throughout the day and pray with their students.<br>• Students are challenged to do their best.<br>• Students' spiritual needs are given appropriate support by church and school.<br>• Law and Gospel are properly divided when discipline is administered.<br>• Staff demonstrates positive school spirit.<br>• Through the school's discipline code, students are assisted to grow in self-control out of love for Christ.<br>• When desirable and practical, students are given the opportunity to participate in making school decisions. | Parent Handbook<br><br>Behavior code<br><br>Bible classes<br><br>Chapel<br><br>Baptisms<br><br>Classroom devotions<br><br>Survey results<br><br>Parent Teacher conferences<br><br>Daily closings<br><br>Narrative<br><br>Observation<br><br>Interview<br><br>LSEM Treehouse program | 3 | 4 |

| General Indicator of Success | Operational Benchmarks | Sources of Evidence (please provide bulleted list utilizing: observation, Handbook, Interview, specific document, etc.) | Self-Study Rating | Team Rating |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2C:04 School personnel model Christ's love in their relationships with parents and guardians. | • School personnel are approachable and receptive to parental questions or concerns.<br>• Parents are viewed by teachers as school partners in the education process.<br>• Staff members understand and relate appropriately with school families.<br>• Parents and guardians are made to feel welcome at the school.<br>• The school provides opportunities for parents to be involved at the school.<br>• The legal rights of parents and legal guardians are protected.<br>• Parents are encouraged to be positive and supportive of the school. | Remind101<br><br>Parent Conferences<br><br>Family Nights<br><br>Parent Nights<br><br>Parent Participation Program<br><br>Parent Handbook<br><br>Daily closings<br><br>Narrative<br><br>Observation<br><br>Interview | 3 | 4 |
| 2C:05 Faculty and administration respect and support one another as individual, fellow members of the body of Christ. | • Faculty and administration gather for devotions regularly.<br>• Faculty and administration speak positively about their co- | Devotion schedule<br><br>Staff care page<br><br>Staff Survey<br><br>Staff Interviews<br><br>Observation | 3 | 3 |

| General Indicator of Success | Operational Benchmarks | Sources of Evidence (please provide bulleted list utilizing: observation, Handbook, Interview, specific document, etc.) | Self-Study Rating | Team Rating |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | workers at the school.<br>• Faculty and administration demonstrate support of one another in tangible ways. | | | |
| **Total** | | | 30 | 32 |
| **Standard Two Overall Rating**<br>**(Total ÷ 10, Rounded to the Nearest Tenth)** | | | 3.0 | 3.2 |

**What is the overall Validation Team rating for Standard 2?** 3.2

**Did the Validation Team change any ratings that were assigned by the school?**

| X | **YES**

| | **NO**

**If YES, what was the justification for changing the rating?**
**2C:03** Staff attend to the individual needs of students, challenge students to be their best and are supported by the LSEM "Tree House" services. We changed this from a "3" to a "4"

**2C:04** School personnel have built relationships with families through their Parent Participation Program and their Parent Education program. This has been done in an exemplary way that demonstrates an understanding of their families and the needs of their families. We changed this from a "3" to a "4"

**What strengths have been validated by the team in this area?**

The Parent support program accomplishes many of the objectives of the traditional PTO program, but is more effective in the face of the economic realities of the TFL families.

The school has built a volunteer and donor network that allows TFLS to make it possible for families to afford to send their children to school and to reduce expenses related to maintaining the facility.

**What concerns have been validated by the team in this area?**

N/A

**What recommendations does the team make for concerns that were not addressed by the school in its Self-Study process?**

N/A

**Please list all Validation Team concerns that the school must add to their Final School Action Plan for Standard 2:**

N/A

# Standard 3: Leadership

**Are required evidentiary pieces for Standard 3 prepared and in good order?**

Standard 3 Required Evidence*: Board or governing authority handbook or policy manual including policies relating to roles of board, administrator and pastor

[X] **YES**

[ ] **NO**

Standard 3 Required Evidence*: Administrator's job description

[X] **YES**

[ ] **NO**

**Does the school comply with the Required Indicators for Standard 3?**

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.

[X] **YES**

[ ] **NO**

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

[X] **YES**

[ ] **NO**

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

[X] **YES**

[ ] **NO**

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.

| X | **YES**

| | **NO**

| General Indicator of Success | Operational Benchmarks | Sources of Evidence (please provide bulleted list utilizing: observation, Handbook, Interview, specific document, etc.) | Self-Study Rating | Team Rating |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3A:04 The governing authority is organized around written policy and understands and operates within its role and function. ☐ | • The governing authority provides for grievance and due process resolution procedures.<br>• The governing authority meets regularly and has clearly defined policies regarding open attendance at meetings and executive sessions.<br>• 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.<br>• Governance policies are determined at official meetings and recorded in the minutes, including appropriate updates and changes to policy.<br>• Minutes are recorded for each meeting and circulated to all members.<br>• Governing authority policies are collected into a policy manual, separate from the minutes.<br>• The governing authority makes appropriate reports to the operating organization(s). | School Board Manuel<br><br>Interview<br><br>Board of Education Minutes<br><br>Board of Education Orientation Presentation | 3 | 2 |

| General Indicator of Success | Operational Benchmarks | Sources of Evidence (please provide bulleted list utilizing: observation, Handbook, Interview, specific document, etc.) | Self-Study Rating | Team Rating |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | • Neither the governing authority nor its individual members involve themselves in the day-to-day operations of the school. | | | |
| **3A:05** Governing authority policy supports effective personnel. | • Written policy delineates roles and responsibilities of the board or governing authority.<br>• Comprehensive job responsibilities and/or limitations are in place for the administrator.<br>• The governing authority evaluates the head administrator annually based on the job description.<br>• The governing authority receives reports from the administrator at each meeting.<br>• The governing authority has written policies or position descriptions clearly delineating relationships between the head administrator and pastor(s). | Interview<br><br>Board of Education Manual<br><br>Principal Job Description<br><br>Administrative Team Description<br><br>TFL Flow Chart<br><br>Teacher Reviews | 3 | 3 |
| **3A:06** Governing authority members meet prescribed qualifications and are trained regarding roles and responsibilities. | • Written policies define qualifications for board or governing authority members.<br>• Governing authority members are | Board of Education Orientation presentation<br><br>TFL Flow Chart | 3 | 3 |

| General Indicator of Success | Operational Benchmarks | Sources of Evidence (please provide bulleted list utilizing: observation, Handbook, Interview, specific document, etc.) | Self-Study Rating | Team Rating |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | required to participate in professional development regarding roles and responsibilities of the governing body and its individual members. | | | |
| **3A:07** The governing authority establishes and employs systematic planning for school improvement. | • 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.<br>• Long-range goals or desired outcomes are developed from the planning process. | Interview<br><br>Annual Report<br><br>Long range planning and Analysis document<br><br>Voters Meeting Agenda | 3 | 3 |
| **3A:08** The governing authority provides strong financial leadership for the school. | • The board or governing authority establishes policies that provide for sound budget planning and fiscal operations.<br>• 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.<br>• The board or governing authority accepts, reviews and devises strategies to react to concerns | Financial policy document<br><br>TFL P and L Statement<br><br>Board of Education Manual<br><br>Board of Education Meeting Minutes<br><br>CTF/School Board Notes<br><br>Interview with Ministry Support Coordinator<br><br>Emails between Ministry Support Coordinator and CPA | 3 | 3 |

| General Indicator of Success | Operational Benchmarks | Sources of Evidence (please provide bulleted list utilizing: observation, Handbook, Interview, specific document, etc.) | Self-Study Rating | Team Rating |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | expressed in the annual financial audit. | | | |
| 3B:02 The administrator meets qualifications required for the position. | • The principal is a member of The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod, Rostered or eligible for Roster status.<br>• The administrator holds active membership in the congregation supporting the school and is regular in Church attendance and Bible study.<br>• The administrator holds current, appropriate state certification or is actively working toward obtaining required certification.<br>• 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 | Narrative<br><br>Interview<br><br>Observation<br><br>CMIF<br><br>Administrative Job Description<br><br><br><br>Licensure Lookup: Teacher file# 314686 Certificate from Concordia for MA | 3 | 2 |

| General Indicator of Success | Operational Benchmarks | Sources of Evidence (please provide bulleted list utilizing: observation, Handbook, Interview, specific document, etc.) | Self-Study Rating | Team Rating |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | toward accomplishing this requirement.) | | | |
| **3B:03** The administrator is provided adequate support to complete required tasks. | • Release time is provided for administrative duties for the school's primary administrator.<br>• 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.)<br>• Secretarial assistance is available for school purposes for at least one-fourth of each school day for every 50 students enrolled.<br>• In a school with more than 200 students, an individual is designated as assistant administrator with associated administrative duties. | School Board Manual<br><br>Admin Team Job Created and Descriptions<br><br><br>Admin Team Job Created and Descriptions<br><br>Administrator Job Description<br>School Board Manual p 8-9 | 3 | 3 |
| **3B:04** The administrator is an effective communicator. | • The administrator communicates frequently and regularly with pastor(s) and teachers individually and collectively. | Narrative<br>Observation<br>Email Sample<br><br>Remind Text example<br>Annual Report | 3 | 3 |

| General Indicator of Success | Operational Benchmarks | Sources of Evidence (please provide bulleted list utilizing: observation, Handbook, Interview, specific document, etc.) | Self-Study Rating | Team Rating |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | • The administrator communicates effectively and frequently with families and students of all ages.<br>• A wide variety of venues both personal (one-to-one) and public are regularly used to facilitate effective communication.<br>• The administrator regularly spends a significant percentage of time listening, observing and speaking with parents, students and teachers.<br>• The administrator effectively communicates and works together with local public school officials.<br>• 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. | Reaching Up, Reaching Out<br><br>Parent Handbook<br><br>Flyers/school communications in english/spanish/amharic<br><br>School calendars<br><br>Chapel Schedules<br><br>Weekly Staff Meeting<br><br>Devotions with Staff<br><br>Present at drop off/pick up – greeting parents<br><br>Chapel and daily closings<br><br>Title Funds documentation | | |
| **3B:05** The administrator is engaged in the process of developing and managing the budget. | • The administrator is involved in developing and managing the budget, including expenditures. | School Board Manual<br><br>Administration Job Description | 3 | 3 |

| General Indicator of Success | Operational Benchmarks | Sources of Evidence (please provide bulleted list utilizing: observation, Handbook, Interview, specific document, etc.) | Self-Study Rating | Team Rating |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | • The administrator has overall responsibility to assure that the budget is managed responsibly, using generally accepted bookkeeping procedures and safeguards.<br>• The administrator provides leadership in securing funds and resources, which may include individual, private, corporate, and/or governmental sources.<br>• Funds provided by auxiliary organizations are allocated per governing board policy, in consultation with the school administrator and regularly audited. | Financial Guidelines and Procedures<br><br>Congregation visits<br><br>Narrative<br><br>School Board Interviews | | |
| **3B:06** The administrator is committed to personal development and the development of staff members. | • The administrator provides spiritual leadership for the school community and in the congregation(s) through word and example.<br>• The administrator is a member of professional organizations.<br>• The administrator provides leadership in curriculum development, staff development, | Prayer at meetings<br><br>Morning Devotions<br><br>Reaching Up, Reaching Out<br><br>Parent Education Nights and Bible Study<br><br>LEA<br><br>Minndependent | 3 | 3 |

| General Indicator of Success | Operational Benchmarks | Sources of Evidence (please provide bulleted list utilizing: observation, Handbook, Interview, specific document, etc.) | Self-Study Rating | Team Rating |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | congregational service, public relations, student evaluation and other school-related activities.<br>• Levels of responsibility and accountability are clearly defined. The administrator provides leadership for implementation of current educational technology, including necessary staff development and training.<br>• The administrator engages in an ongoing program of professional staff supervision. | Principal Duties and Responsibilities<br><br>Professional Development Plan<br><br>Teacher Mentorship Program<br><br>Email<br><br>Teacher Evaluation Form | | |
| **Total** | | | 30 | 28 |
| **Standard Three Overall Rating**<br>**(Total ÷ 10, Rounded to the Nearest Tenth)** | | | 3 | 2.8 |

**What is the overall Validation Team rating for Standard 3?**  2.8

**Did the Validation Team change any ratings that were assigned by the school?**

☒ YES

☐ NO

**If YES, what was the justification for changing the rating?**
The principal, while holding a MN teaching certificate, does not currently hold a MN administrator's certificate.  While encouraging the principal to consider gaining her administrator's certificate the validation team recognizes the hardships that both the principal and Trinity First would encounter upon the current path to MN certification.

**What strengths have been validated by the team in this area?**
There is a healthy and supportive relationship between the administrative team and the Board Education.  Trinity First Lutheran recently added multiple key administrative support staff that allowed the Administrator to lead more effectively.  The administrator is present to assist her team and school parents.
There is a succession plan and there have been intentional efforts to prepare the next leader.

**What concerns have been validated by the team in this area?**
**3A:04** Trinity First is owned and operated in a nontraditional, church school relationship model. There is however a risk of support, input, and accountability changing or dissipating as leadership changes or if the congregation remnant dissolves.

**3A:04** There appears to be a less formal connection between the Board of Education's leadership in practice and what the current policy manual states.

**What recommendations does the team make for concerns that were not addressed by the school in its Self-Study process?**
**3A:04** Work with the Trinity First congregation remnant to modify the constitution and bylaws of the congregation to ensure that the school may operate with or without the existence of the remnant in fact as it is currently operating in practice. Consider utilizing an outside consultant to assist with this effort.

**3A:04** That the guidelines found in the Board Manual be followed in practice.

**Please list all Validation Team concerns that the school must add to their Final School Action Plan for Standard 3:**

**3A:04** Trinity First is owned and operated in a nontraditional, church school relationship model. There is however a risk of support, input, and accountability changing or dissipating as leadership changes or if the congregation remnant dissolves.

**3A:04** There appears to be a less formal connection between the Board of Education's leadership in practice and what the current policy manual states.

## Standard 4: Professional Personnel

**Are required evidentiary pieces for Standard 4 prepared and in good order?**

Standard 4 Required Evidence*: School's staff development plan

☒ **YES**

☐ **NO**

Standard 4 Required Evidence*: Non-discriminatory salary and benefit scale or policy

☒ **YES**

☐ **NO**

Standard 4 Required Evidence*: MinistrySafe Training for all school employees, coaches, sponsors (encouraged to have all volunteers also trained)

☒ **YES**

☐ **NO**

**Does the school comply with the Required Indicators for Standard 4?**

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

☒ **YES**

☐ **NO**

| General Indicator of Success | Operational Benchmarks | Sources of Evidence (please provide bulleted list utilizing: observation, Handbook, Interview, specific document, etc.) | Self-Study Rating | Team Rating |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **4:02** Christ-centered teachers have qualities and qualifications necessary for success in their defined areas of service. | • All teachers demonstrate a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and a dedication to teaching in the Lutheran school.<br>• 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 or Seminar Program through the Concordia University Education Network (CUEnet).<br>• Teachers have been prepared and vetted following prescribed federal and state mandates for background checks and training.<br>• Full-time professional staff members have appropriate teaching certificate(s) from the state and meet requirements for their specific assignments. | Interviews<br><br>Narrative<br><br>Teacher Survey<br><br>Classroom Posters and Decorations<br><br>Background Checks in Personnel Files<br><br>Copies of Teaching Licenses in Personnel Files<br><br>Teacher contact (Solemn Agreement) | 2 | 2 |
| **4:03** Teachers are informed of, and subsequently evaluated and supported in the continuing pursuit of professional growth and development. | • Programs for teacher supervision/evaluation/growth have been adopted and are implemented by the administrator.<br>• Teachers engage in professional development, including spiritual development and are accountable for implementation that supports student learning.<br>• Teachers attend workshops, conferences, seminars and training appropriate to their position and discipline.<br>• LCMS Rostered teachers are provided opportunities to attend LCMS events.<br>• Teachers hold membership in professional organizations.<br>• The school provides opportunity, training and support so that teachers may | Interviews<br><br>Faculty Devotions<br><br>Professional Development Plan<br><br>Teacher Evaluation by Principal<br><br>Ministry Safe Certificates<br><br>Technology Training Certificates<br><br>Self Information – Teacher and Administrator | 3 | 2 |

| | effectively and appropriately engage technology in classroom instruction. | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **4:04** Teachers and support staff are empowered and equipped to effectively accomplish their assigned task. | • New teachers receive thorough orientation and are supported with experienced, assigned teaching mentors.<br>• Teachers demonstrate and continuously improve knowledge and skills necessary for effective instruction and modeling of Christ-centered values.<br>• Policies related to teachers and support staff are established and practiced.<br>• The average student-professional personnel ratio is appropriate for the age and level of the students and ensures optimal student growth.<br>• The number of staff members is adequate to provide effective instruction and supervision for students at all school activities.<br>• The nondiscriminatory salary and benefit scale is adopted and implemented for all personnel. | August Orientation<br><br>Preterm Certificates<br><br>Interviews – Staff Support for one another.<br><br>Observation<br><br>Teacher Student Ratio<br><br>Teacher Handbook<br><br>Staff Handbook<br><br>Salary Scale | 3 | 3 |
| **4:05** Employees and volunteers serving in support roles have the qualifications and training necessary for success in their defined area of service. | • Support staff (e.g., teacher assistants, student teachers, nurse) meets state requirements for their specific assignments.<br>• Appropriate policies related to support staff are established and practiced.<br>• Adequate training for support staff is provided.<br>• Appropriate policies and training for volunteers are in place.<br>• Staff members understand and relate appropriately with students and their families. | Background checks in volunteer files<br><br>Volunteer Handbook<br><br>Volunteer Information Form/Volunteer Sign-off document.<br><br>Volunteer Orientation PowerPoint<br><br>Pre-school Year Meeting for Staff Agenda<br><br>Teacher/Staff Handbook and Training Materials | 3 | 3 |
| **Total** | | | 11 | 10 |

| Standard Four Overall Rating<br>(Total ÷ 4, Rounded to the Nearest Tenth) | | 2.5 |
|---|---|---|

**What is the overall Validation Team rating for Standard 4?** 2.5

**Did the Validation Team change any ratings that were assigned by the school?**

| x | YES

| | NO

**If YES, what was the justification for changing the rating?**
4:03 Written documentation showing that all teachers engage in professional development and receive consistent evaluation per the professional development plan and teacher observation plan as set forth by Trinity First was not found.

4.03 Evidence showing that all teachers have memberships in professional organizations was not found.

**What strengths have been validated by the team in this area?**
Trinity First has dedicated teachers, staff, and administrators that work selflessly to provide the best environment and education to the students. These individuals are the heart and soul of this ministry.

Trinity First has a unified staff that cares for, supports, and assists each other.

**What concerns have been validated by the team in this area?**
- Not all teachers are LCMS trained and those that are not LCMS trained are not in the colloquy process.
- Teachers without current teaching licenses need to be encouraged and directed to get their licensure up-to-date.
- Though professional development plans and teacher observation processes exist, there is inconsistent follow through in these areas. Based on teacher interviews there is a desire for regular formal observations that provide feedback on teaching and classroom procedures and for more professional development opportunities to be provided or attended outside of TFLS.
- Personnel files have some document omissions.

**What recommendations does the team make for concerns that were not addressed by the school in its Self-Study process?**

Determine a system to track/record the professional development activity that each teacher completes annually.

Help teachers identify professional organizations that will help them develop knowledge and skills to enhance their effectiveness in the classroom.

Help teachers find and participate in professional development workshops/seminars that meet each teacher's areas of need or interest.

Create a checklist/cover sheet showing what documents are essential for inclusion in an employee's personnel file.

**Please list all Validation Team concerns that the school must add to their Final School Action Plan for Standard 4:**

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

## Standard 5: Teaching and Learning

**Are required evidentiary pieces for Standard 5 prepared and in good order?**

Standard 5 Required Evidence*: Curriculum documentation is developed and implemented for every grade level for religion, mathematics, science, reading, language arts, social studies, world languages, art, music, physical education and any other subject taught. (Early childhood centers need not segment learner outcomes into specific subject areas.)

| X | YES

| | NO

Standard 5 Required Evidence*: A current schedule is prepared for each classroom, indicating clearly when subjects (activities) are taught and during what periods.

| X | YES

| | NO

Standard 5 Required Evidence*: Provide a chart illustrating the semester/yearly instructional minutes of all content offered, percentage of each school week allocated to each subject (activity), at each level, including a comparison with state guidelines (If your state does not have minute requirements, provide all other information and note there are no state requirements).

| X | YES

| | NO

Standard 5 Required Evidence*: 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.

| X | YES

| | NO

**Does the school comply with the Required Indicators for Standard 5?**

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**

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

☒ **YES**

☐ **NO**

| General Indicator of Success | Operational Benchmarks | Sources of Evidence (please provide bulleted list utilizing: observation, Handbook, Interview, specific document, etc.) | Self-Study Rating | Team Rating |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **5:03** The school community builds and maintains a vision, direction and focus for student learning. | • The school prepares students for the next level of education and life.<br>• The school aligns its goals, curriculum and measures to those of the next level so that students transition successfully.<br>• The school quantifies, tracks and publicly celebrates student success.<br>• School leaders monitor and support the improvement of instructional practices used by teachers to ensure student success. | Curriculum Document<br><br>Curriculum Trak<br><br>Curriculum Evaluation<br><br>Rubric Document<br><br>Minnesota State Standards<br><br>Curricular Lesson examples | 3 | 3 |
| **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. | • The curriculum is aligned with delineated standards.<br>• The curriculum is documented, assessed, monitored and challenges all students.<br>• 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 | Curriculum Documents<br><br>Curriculum Trak<br><br>Minnesota Standards<br><br>One in Christ Curriculum<br><br>Enduring Faith Curriculum<br><br>Summer Bridge Program<br><br>Choir, Music, Spring Musical<br><br>Chapel<br><br>Cross Country, | 3 | 3 |

| General Indicator of Success | Operational Benchmarks | Sources of Evidence (please provide bulleted list utilizing: observation, Handbook, Interview, specific document, etc.) | Self-Study Rating | Team Rating |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | academic preparation.<br>• The curriculum is aligned with LCMS teachings.<br>• The curriculum ensures that students can pursue their God-given talents and passions.<br>• The curriculum is used as an opportunity to proclaim the Gospel. | Basketball, Lego League | | |
| **5:05** Teachers use a wide variety of instructional strategies that engage students and ensure mastery of learning expectations. | • 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.<br>• Classroom instruction involves a variety of strategies and settings that address diverse student needs and accommodate individual learning styles as fully as possible.<br>• Evidence of active student engagement exists in every classroom. | SEL (Social Emotional Learning) class PowerPoint<br><br>SPED and Title services<br><br>Classroom observations of Student engagement<br><br>Service learning examples (LBT, Samaratin's Purse, Clean-up projects) | 3 | 3 |

| General Indicator of Success | Operational Benchmarks | Sources of Evidence (please provide bulleted list utilizing: observation, Handbook, Interview, specific document, etc.) | Self-Study Rating | Team Rating |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | • Service learning is a component of the school's required program. | | | |
| **5:06** Teachers intentionally communicate and collaborate to improve instruction and student learning. | • Teachers regularly participate in staff development activities designed to provide professional growth, improve instruction and enhance student learning.<br>• Teachers pursue opportunities to interact with colleagues seeking ways to improve.<br>• Teachers work together to share responsibility for student learning.<br>• Teachers regularly share content, resources, instructional techniques and management skills.<br>• School leaders empower teachers with time and resources that facilitate opportunities for communication and collaboration. | August staff development agenda<br><br>End of year staff agenda<br><br>Narrative<br><br>Professional<br><br>Development Plan<br><br>Teacher Observations<br><br>Observation<br><br>Interview | 3 | 3 |
| **5:07** Technology enhances and enriches the students' learning environment. | • Faculty members are users, instructors and participants in the process of engaging technology with | Technology plan<br><br>Observation<br><br>Interview<br><br>On-line Learning Day Documents | 3 | 3 |

| General Indicator of Success | Operational Benchmarks | Sources of Evidence (please provide bulleted list utilizing: observation, Handbook, Interview, specific document, etc.) | Self-Study Rating | Team Rating |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | the learning process in schools.<br>• Faculty members acquire the necessary technology skills to use personally and integrate and guide student learning.<br>• Clear and intentional planning and protocols for technology are in place.<br>• Technology enhances curriculum, instruction, assessment and is used by teachers to personalize, enhance and improve instruction.<br>• Student technology is monitored and filtered to promote appropriate integration of technology into the learning process. | Lego League<br><br>Professional Development plan | | |
| 5:08 Curriculum, instruction and assessment are regularly monitored and adjusted through the collection and analysis of date-driven information. | • 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.<br>• Multiple forms of student assessment drive | MAP test tesults<br><br>Description of testing analysis<br><br>Gradelink Report card sample<br><br>Curriculum evaluation rubric document | 3 | 3 |

| General Indicator of Success | Operational Benchmarks | Sources of Evidence (please provide bulleted list utilizing: observation, Handbook, Interview, specific document, etc.) | Self-Study Rating | Team Rating |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | instructional strategies. <br> • Student learning is monitored, tracked, recorded and reported regularly and continuously during the time the student is enrolled at the school. <br> • A comprehensive program that examines student achievement with frequent progress monitoring is used to individualize instruction for student success. | Curriculum document differentiation example <br><br> Narrative <br><br> Interview <br><br> LSEM and Title Teacher student progress tracking <br><br> $2^{nd}$ grade assessment examples (ELA, Math, Science, History) | | |
| **Total** | | | 18 | 18 |
| **Standard Five Overall Rating** <br> **(Total ÷ 6, Rounded to the Nearest Tenth)** | | | 3.0 | 3.0 |

**What is the overall Validation Team rating for Standard 5?** 3.0

**Did the Validation Team change any ratings that were assigned by the school?**

☐ YES

☒ NO

**If YES, what was the justification for changing the rating?**
N/A

**What strengths have been validated by the team in this area?**

- Through early student assessment by Lutheran Special Education Ministries, students are provided individualized LSEM Tree House services.
- LSEM teachers and Trinity First teachers collaborate on the needs of students at the time of need with face-to-face conversations rather than delayed meetings and emails.

**What concerns have been validated by the team in this area?**
N/A

**What recommendations does the team make for concerns that were not addressed by the school in its Self-Study process?**
N/A

**Please list all Validation Team concerns that the school must add to their Final School Action Plan for Standard 5:**

N/A

# Standard 6: Student Services

**Are required evidentiary pieces for Standard 6 prepared and in good order?**

Standard 6 Required Evidence*: Enrollment / admission policy

| X | YES

|   | NO

Standard 6 Required Evidence*: Crisis emergency plan

| X | YES

|   | NO

Standard 6 Required Evidence*: MinistrySafe training certificates for all staff, coaches, activity sponsors, and volunteers working directly with students

| X | YES

|   | NO

**Does the school comply with the Required Indicators for Standard 6?**

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

| X | YES

|   | NO

| General Indicator of Success | Operational Benchmarks | Sources of Evidence (please provide bulleted list utilizing: observation, Handbook, Interview, specific document, etc.) | Self-Study Rating | Team Rating |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **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. | • Student applicants are admitted per established written admission criteria.<br>• Permanent cumulative records for each student are maintained, stored and shared in compliance with state and federal law.<br>• The school administers and practices written procedures for addressing students' emotional, social and psychological needs.<br>• Procedures are established for evaluating students for promotion and/or graduation. | website<br><br>Parent Handbook, and interview with Administrator<br><br>Cum records, IEPs, and test scores securely maintained<br><br>SEL Classes Documentation<br><br>Observation<br><br>Parent Education Program<br><br>Narrative<br><br>Teacher/Staff Handbook Copy of Transcript | 3 | 3 |
| **6:03** Extracurricular activities provide opportunities for students to further enhance God-given talents and abilities. | • The school provides a variety of extracurricular activities that meet the needs and interests of the students and<br>• reflect the purpose of the school.<br>• Extracurricular activities are carefully supervised by trained personnel.<br>• Those who supervise extracurricular | Cross country Basketball – Athletic Handbook<br><br>Observed and Evidence of Musical<br><br>Evidence of Worship Band<br><br>Teacher and Staff Handbook p 9 and 26<br><br>Ministry Safe Background Checks<br><br>Volunteer Handbook | 3 | 3 |

| General Indicator of Success | Operational Benchmarks | Sources of Evidence (please provide bulleted list utilizing: observation, Handbook, Interview, specific document, etc.) | Self-Study Rating | Team Rating |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | activities accept the purpose of the school.<br>• Background checks are completed and on file for those who supervise extracurricular activities. | Volunteer Orientation<br><br>Slides<br><br>Narrative<br><br>Observation | | |
| **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. | • Immunization documentation, health tests and screenings conducted at the school conform with local and state laws.<br>• First-aid supplies are available and readily accessible to authorized personnel.<br>• Requirements for safety are conducted and recorded (i.e., fire, tornado, intruder and other drills).<br>• Plans are developed and implemented for blood-borne pathogen, asbestos, CPR, first-aid training and the distribution of medication.<br>• Background checks are conducted for all who have contact with students on a regular basis.<br>• Training for the recognition of child | Health Records File and Folders<br><br>Parent Handbook – Immunization form<br><br>First Aid Supplies and Bag in main office<br><br>Classroom Go Bags<br><br>AED and Carry Bag in Main Office<br><br><br><br>Record of Drill Documentation<br><br><br>CPR Certification Certificates<br><br>Blood-Borne Pathogen attendance records | 3 | 3 |

| General Indicator of Success | Operational Benchmarks | Sources of Evidence (please provide bulleted list utilizing: observation, Handbook, Interview, specific document, etc.) | Self-Study Rating | Team Rating |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | abuse and the protection of children is required for all who have contact with students on a regular basis.<br>• The school ensures the safety and security of its students when online. | Medication Administration Logs<br><br>Documentation<br><br>Ministry Safe Certification Records<br><br>Background Checks<br><br>Teacher/Staff Handbook<br><br>Student Technology Use Agreement<br><br>Guide for technology use document<br><br>Parent Handbook – Phone Use | | |
| 6:05 School food services meet or exceed national and state guidelines. | • Care is taken to ensure cleanliness where meals or snacks are consumed.<br>• Where food service is provided, adequate and qualified personnel are available to plan and serve a variety of well- | Observation<br>MN Food License<br><br>Sanitation Logs<br><br>Refrigeration Logs<br><br>Interview and Observations – Food Safety Training for Staff | 3 | 2 |

| General Indicator of Success | Operational Benchmarks | Sources of Evidence (please provide bulleted list utilizing: observation, Handbook, Interview, specific document, etc.) | Self-Study Rating | Team Rating |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | balanced, wholesome meals in full accordance with federal guidelines. | | | |
| **Total** | | | 12 | 11 |
| **Standard Six Overall Rating**<br>**(Total ÷ 4, Rounded to the Nearest Tenth)** | | | 3 | 2.8 |

**What is the overall Validation Team rating for Standard 6?** 2.8

**Did the Validation Team change any ratings that were assigned by the school?**

| x | YES

| | NO

**If YES, what was the justification for changing the rating?**

**6:05** School food services meet or exceed national and state guidelines.

**What strengths have been validated by the team in this area?**
Trinity First provides and encourages a variety of opportunities for students to get involved in areas of their interests. Evidence points to the dedication and commitment of staff giving their time outside of professional duties to provide these opportunities.
**What concerns have been validated by the team in this area?**
It was brought to our attention that complete training all for those working in the kitchen/lunch program has not been completed and is mandated.

**What recommendations does the team make for concerns that were not addressed by the school in its Self-Study process?**

**6:05** School food services meet or exceed national and state guidelines.
School food service is in the growth and development stage. As the program grows, a plan for mandated training and record keeping of that training should be developed to ensure accountability.

**Please list all Validation Team concerns that the school must add to their Final School Action Plan for Standard 6:**

**6:05** School food services meet or exceed national and state guidelines.

# Standard 7: Facilities

**Are required evidentiary pieces for Standard 7 prepared and in good order?**

Standard 7 Required Evidence*: School floor plan

| X | YES

| | NO

Standard 7 Required Evidence*: School Crisis Management Plan (including evacuation and reunification plans)

| X | YES

| | NO

**Does the school comply with the Required Indicators for Standard 7?**

7:01*  Facilities are well-maintained and free from hazards, providing a safe and productive learning environment.

| X | YES

| | NO

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

| X | YES

| | NO

| General Indicator of Success | Operational Benchmarks | Sources of Evidence (Please provide bulleted list utilizing: observation, Handbook, Interview, specific document, etc.) | Self-Study Rating | Team Rating |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **7:03** Buildings, grounds and equipment are well maintained, clean and appropriate for the age and number of students. | • 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.<br>• All teaching/ learning areas are properly ventilated, lighted and have adequate space for the number and size of the students.<br>• The buildings are cleaned daily and the restrooms are sanitary.<br>• School furniture is sufficient in quantity and age appropriate.<br>• The school administrator(s) participates in the supervision of those who maintain the physical facilities.<br>• Adequate provisions exist for offices, area for students needing care, recreation, library/media center and space for small-group instruction. | Photos<br><br>Observations<br><br>Interviews<br><br>Custodial and cleaning schedule | 3 | 3 |

| General Indicator of Success | Operational Benchmarks | Sources of Evidence (Please provide bulleted list utilizing: observation, Handbook, Interview, specific document, etc.) | Self-Study Rating | Team Rating |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | • The school facility has appropriate technology infrastructure. | | | |
| **7:04** Physical facilities provide specific (crosses, signs, etc.) and non-specific (attractive, adequate, etc.) Christian witness to the community. | • The buildings contain evidence that the school is a Lutheran Christian school.<br>• Christian banners, pictures and posters are displayed in the hallway, entryway, gymnasium and classrooms.<br>• A cross is hung in a prominent place.<br>• An outdoor sign provides evidence of a Lutheran Christian School to the community. | Photos<br><br>Classroom and building observations. | 3 | 3 |
| **7:05** The building and grounds provide a safe school environment. | • Policies and procedures are in place to maintain a safe school environment.<br>• The playground, athletic field(s), and school grounds are properly supervised, safe and fenced when appropriate and needed.<br>• access to the facility, has locked entrances and is secure during normal school hours.<br>• guards, lanes and school speed Crossing zones are | Building campus observations<br><br>Interviews<br><br>Arrival and dismissal observations | 3 | 3 |

| General Indicator of Success | Operational Benchmarks | Sources of Evidence (Please provide bulleted list utilizing: observation, Handbook, Interview, specific document, etc.) | Self-Study Rating | Team Rating |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | provided where needed.<br>• A safe, carefully supervised procedure for loading and unloading students in cars, buses and other vehicles is in effect. | | | |
| **Total** | | | 9 | 9 |
| **Standard Seven Overall Rating**<br>**(Total ÷ 3, Rounded to the Nearest Tenth)** | | | 3 | 3 |

**What is the overall Validation Team rating for Standard 7:**

3

**Did the Validation Team change any ratings that were assigned by the school?**

☐ YES

☒ NO

**If YES, what was the justification for changing the rating?**

**What strengths have been validated by the team in this area?**

The validation team recognizes the ongoing flexibility and innovation of the Trinity First team in maximizing teaching and learning space for the students.   The school also consistently provides a safe and welcoming facility for the students and families.

**What concerns have been validated by the team in this area?**

Trinity First appears to be limited in future enrollment growth by its current footprint.

**What recommendations does the team make for concerns that were not addressed by the school in its Self-Study process?**

The validation team encourages the ministry of Trinity First to continue exploring options of expanding its facility through the ongoing capital campaign and building plan.

**Please list all Validation Team concerns that the school must add to their Final School Action Plan for Standard 7:**

# Review of the School Action Plan

As a school conducts its Self-Study process, it identifies areas needing improvement. These items are usually rated as **2 (Emerging)** showing that the condition is recognized as important by the school but is inconsistently or irregularly applied. It is not supported with sufficient practices, evidence or documentation and there is room for improvement in this area. A rating of **1 (Not Evident)** means there is observable conflict or deficiency with the condition at the school or that the school does not enact this condition.

Items that have been identified as **2 (Emerging)** or **1 (Not Evident)** require planned improvement actions. Over the course of the school's accreditation cycle, the items must be targeted (with a completion date), assigned, evaluated and completed. The School Action Plan is the organization's roadmap, guiding the improvement process during the school's accreditation cycle.

Certain items will be rated as **3 (Operational)**, and while the condition is in place and functionally supported and practiced, it may not always be fully enacted or easily evidenced in every aspect of the school program. The school functions acceptably in this area and the school is not required to develop ways to improve in this area.

In a narrative, please address the following aspects of the school action plan:

- What is the Validation Team's evaluation of the realistic attainability of the plan as a whole?
- Were any items not addressed in the School Action Plan that were identified by the school in its Self-Study Report?
- Does the team wish to target additional action items not identified by the school in its Self-Study Report?

It is the opinion of the validation team that the school action plan developed during this NLSA cycle is realistically attainable and will assist Trinity First Lutheran School to improve its ministry. There were no items identified by the school during the self-study process that the school failed to identify in the School Action Plan. In addition to items of improvement identified by the school in its self-study report the validation team recommends that action items be developed for standards 1:05, 3A:04, 4:03, and 6:05. The validation teams concerns and recommendations can be found at the end of each specific standard report.