

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

Revised September 2023



PART 1

The Self-Study Process

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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.

MISSION, PURPOSE, VISION and VALUES

Mission

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

Purpose

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

Vision

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

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

Values

- Lutheran Culture
- Educational Excellence
- Continuing Improvement
- Christ-centered Community

INTRODUCTION

Accreditation through NLSA is a whole-school evaluation and improvement process. All programs and levels of a school can be evaluated using the NLSA process. However, in some cases, schools of multiple levels may be better served by simultaneously using two or more separate NLSA protocols. When this is deemed necessary by the school and approved by the District Accreditation Commission, schools may submit separate applications for different protocols and complete them at the same time. Application forms are submitted together to the appropriate District office with a letter of explanation as to the combined nature of the application. Only one application fee is required when a single school chooses to use more than one protocol simultaneously.

The Standards are the foundation of NLSA and are based on four assumptions:

1. Lutheran schools strive to be Christ-centered Educational Ministries of Excellence.
2. Lutheran school educators believe that a high-quality educational program is required of schools for them to be good stewards of the blessings given by Almighty God.
3. Lutheran school administrators cooperate with governmental agencies unless such cooperation inhibits the free sharing of the Gospel.
4. Those who own and operate Lutheran schools, when and where appropriate, strive to meet and exceed all local, state, regional and federal guidelines for public schools.

The seven Accreditation Standards for Lutheran Schools are:

- I. **Purpose** — The school is purpose-driven.
- II. **Relationships** — The school demonstrates its Christian mission through relationships.
 - a. School and Congregation
 - b. School and Community
 - c. School Climate
- III. **Leadership** — The school is governed and administered following written policy.
 - a. Governance
 - b. Administration
- IV. **Professional Personnel** — A qualified and competent staff serves the school.
- V. **Teaching and Learning** — The school's Christ-centered curriculum, instructional design and assessment practices ensure teacher effectiveness and engaged student learning.
- VI. **Student Services** — The school plans for and provides resources and activities that extend beyond standard classroom instruction.
- VII. **Facilities** — Buildings, grounds and equipment provide a safe and healthy environment that serves to enhance student learning.

THE SELF-STUDY PROCESS

Faculty Involvement

Since faculty members have a unique perspective and a deep understanding of the school, they must be significantly involved with all aspects of the Self-Study process. They should be involved in the decision to become accredited, fully informed of the process and its requirements, intensely invested and involved throughout the Self-Study process and aware and supportive of the general finding of the Self-Study Report.

Self-Study Steering Committee

After the decision is made to seek National Lutheran School Accreditation, five to eight people, representing various members of the school community, are appointed as a Steering Committee. The Steering Committee's primary task is to plan, guide and coordinate all things related to the Self-Study process. Its responsibilities include appointing necessary subcommittees, preparing the Self-Study report, reviewing the report of the Validation Team Visit members and making final recommendations for continued improvement. It is suggested that Steering Committee and subcommittee membership include parents, teachers, school administrator, pastor, other church staff members and governing authority members. (See the Administrator's Manual for additional information.)

The Self-Study Report Process

The Self-Study process begins by securing the Required Evidence and evaluating the school's compliance with the Required Indicators of Success. These are the items that must be present for the school to be accredited in good standing. **If "No" is marked for any Required Indicator of Success, it is necessary to develop the required items or correct the deficiency before moving forward with the process.**

The next step is a careful analysis of the school's status using the General Indicators of Success. The General Indicators of Success are specifically designed for each Standard and are written for the purpose of clarifying and explaining, but also to stimulate thought, reflection and self-evaluation by the subcommittees.

The more significant the practices and their impact related to the accomplishment of the indicator, the higher the rating. After gathering evidence and citing practices and their results, the subcommittee arrives at a consensus about the correct benchmark rating for each General Indicator of Success.

A definition for the "operational" rating (3) has been assigned to each General Indicator of Success. The task of the subcommittee is to assemble the evidence and practices to lead the group to an overall rating that agrees with the actual condition that exists in the school. To be compliant with the Standard, there is an expectation that a school will average "operational" (3) for all General Indicators of Success assigned to each Standard. General Indicators of Success ranked as "emerging" (2) or "not evident" (1) must be addressed in a well-developed school improvement plan designed to be implemented over the course of a school's assigned accreditation cycle.

The expectation for an “operational” rating is clearly defined for each General Indicator of Success. When a school exceeds the stated expectations, and its practices and evidence are powerful and replicable, the school may rate the General Indicator of Success as “highly functional” (4). A “4” rating indicates that a school performs exceptionally well and exceeds expectations in this area.

If a school does not meet the “operational” definition in one or more areas, an “emerging” rating (2) or “not evident” rating (1) is appropriate. “Emerging” ratings and “not evident” ratings are items that require action and must be targeted in the School Action Plan.

Following the subcommittee’s careful analysis, the school is ready to complete the Summary and Response Actions. This area allows each subcommittee to review its findings and to identify the school’s strengths and areas that must be improved. Any areas needing improvement are to be recognized with specific actions and assignments with target dates to meet the identified deficiencies. The Steering Committee reviews the school’s suggestions related to each assigned Standard and the sections are included in the School Action Plan.

The required comprehensive nature of the Self-Study Report is designed to stimulate thought and to assist in a thorough Self-Study and self-improvement process. It is also designed to provide enough evidence to the Validation Team Visit members and NLSA officials to determine whether the school is worthy of accreditation through NLSA.

The Self-Study Report

The Self-Study Report Form is to be used as a tool for self-evaluation and overall school improvement. Each of the seven Standards are to be addressed and considered independently, but with an emphasis that all Standards are guided and directed by the school’s purpose, and in that way, the school’s purpose is integrated throughout each one. For each Standard, the report consists of the following items:

Potential Evidence

Potential evidentiary documents provide support as the subcommittee determines the rating for each General Indicator of Success. The list included in the Standard area provides suggestions but is not all-inclusive. Schools are to review the list of potential evidence and determine those present at the school. Additional evidence not listed in the potential listing area may also be presented. Ratings are based on the actual condition related to the evidence and practices in place at the school. Evidence, or the lack thereof, will assist the subcommittee 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 Validation Team Visit members to review.

Potential Practices

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

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

Respond to the Following Questions

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 the ways it meets the needs of its students. This also allows the school to indicate any nuances that are unique to the school's learning environment.

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.

Required Indicators of Success

Required indicators of Success must be answered YES and supported by evidence and comments for the school to be accredited in good standing.

General Indicators of Success

General Indicators of Success help the school quantify its compliance with the required Standard. The quantification of the school's compliance for each General Indicator of Success is based on the evidence and the practices that support the rating. Each General Indicator of Success is to be rated by a subcommittee, using the benchmark and assigned point value. A subcommittee arrives at a rating after careful consideration and discussion. Written comments provide an explanation for the rating given to each indicator and 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.

REQUIREMENTS OF THE SELF-STUDY PROCESS

Indicators and Evidence

Standard	Required Evidence	Required Indicators	General Indicators
1	1	2	4
2A	0	1	2
2B	1	1	4
2C	1	1	4
3A	1	3	5
3B	1	1	5
4	2	1	4
5	4	2	6
6	2	1	4
7	1	2	3
TOTAL	14	15	41

Required Evidence or Documentation

Standard	Required Evidence or Documentation
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The written purpose/philosophy/mission statement
2A	<i>No evidence or documentation required</i>
2B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nondiscrimination policy
2C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School discipline code
3A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Governing board handbook or policy manual, including policies relating to roles of board, administrator and pastor
3B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The administrator's job description
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff development plan Non-discriminatory salary and benefit scale or policy
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Curriculum documentation for every grade level for religion, mathematics, science, reading, language arts, social studies, world languages, art, music, physical education and any other subject taught (Early childhood centers need not segment learner outcomes into specific subject areas) A current schedule for each classroom, indicating clearly which subjects (activities) are taught at which times A chart illustrating the percentage of each school week allocated to each subject (activity) at each level, including a comparison with state guidelines An analysis of the results of standardized tests administered for each grade level for the past three years, including a description on how this information is used to evaluate and improve student learning
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enrollment/admission policy

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Crisis emergency plan
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• School floor plan

Required Indicators of Success

Standard	Required Indicators of Success
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.
1:02	School leadership and staff members understand and accept the purpose of the school.
2A:01	The school is operated by one or more congregations of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) or maintains an active Registered Service Organization (RSO) status with the Synod.
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.
2C:01	The climate of the school flows from and supports the school's purpose.
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.
3A:02	The operating organization has written policies clearly defining governing authority membership.
3A:03	The governing authority establishes written policies or administrative limitations that empower the administration in operating the school.
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.
4:01	All school personnel express and demonstrate agreement with the stated school purpose.
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.
5:02	The school possesses, develops and implements curriculum documentation for religion, mathematics, science, reading, language arts, social studies, art, world languages, music, physical education and any other subject taught by the school. (Early childhood centers need not segment learning outcomes into specific subject areas.)
6:01	Services offered by the school meet or exceed federal, state and local requirements.
7:01	Facilities are well maintained and free from hazards, providing a safe and productive learning environment.
7:02	Facilities conform fully to all applicable laws, including health, safety and building codes.

IDENTIFICATION OF POWERFUL PRACTICES

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. Schools are encouraged to provide the Validation Team with what the school believes to be Powerful Practices. The Validation Team will validate and if appropriate add Powerful Practices to the school's Validation Team Report.

CONSTRUCTING THE SCHOOL ACTION PLAN

The final element of the school Self-Study process is the construction of the School Action Plan. Accreditation is an ongoing process that does not end with the Validation Team Visit. Evaluation is a stimulating force that leads to school improvement for the benefit of its students and community. Accreditation requires that schools identify strengths and concerns related to every Standard area. The strengths are to be celebrated and the areas of concern are to be considered and addressed strategically. As a result of the findings of the school during its Self-Study process and the recommendations of the Validation Team Visit team, the school establishes and implements a blueprint for ongoing improvement. That blueprint is known as the School Action Plan.

A preliminary School Action Plan is developed as the concluding process of the school's Self-Study. This plan must address every area of concern ("emerging" [2] and "not evident" [1]), and 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.

After the school receives the Validation Team Report, the school is required to amend its Preliminary School Action Plan to include additional concerns that are identified by the Validation Team and provide a separate Final School Action Plan. Schools are required to use the format included below to develop the Preliminary and the Final School Action Plan. Additionally, this format is the required documentation for the Cumulative Annual Report. The final School Action Plan and the Validation Team Report must be submitted to the District Commission within two weeks of the Validation Team Visit. A school that links an accreditation process with an intentional School Action Plan and continually uses it to better serve its students is a school on a pathway to success.

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. **The Final School Action must include all items recommended by the Validation Team. The School is required to submit the Preliminary School Action Plan as part of the Self-Study and then submit a separate Final School Action Plan following the Validation Team visit. In addition, if the school has a Strategic Plan, this too should be submitted with**

the Final 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 Preliminary School Action Plan, the completed Final School Action Plan and the school’s Strategic Plan must be included as separate documents with the final submission of the school’s Self-Study to the District Accreditation Commission.

NLSA Preliminary School Action Plan												
School Name:												
School Address:												
LCMS District:												
Administrator:												
Date of Most Recent NLSA Validation Team Visit:												
Accreditation Year		Initial		Year 1		Year 2		Year 3		Year 4		Year 5
Standard & Indicator Number	Self-Study Concerns & Strategies				Target School Year	Responsible Party	Action Taken	School Year Addressed				

NLSA Final School Action Plan

School Name:

School Address:

LCMS District:

Administrator:

Date of Most Recent NLSA Validation Team Visit:

Accreditation Year Initial Year 1 Year 2 Year 3 Year 4 Year 5

Standard & Indicator Number	Self-Study Concerns & Strategies	Target School Year	Responsible Party	Action Taken	School Year Addressed

National Lutheran School Accreditation

Evidence-Based Self-Study Report

for Lutheran Schools

Revised September 2023

PART 2

The Self-Study Document

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GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

1. School

Name: Trinity First Lutheran School
Address: 1115 E. 19th St
City, State, Zip Code: Minneapolis, MN 55404
Phone: (612) 871-2353
Email: info@trinityfirst.org

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

Trinity First Lutheran Church
1115 E. 19th St
Minneapolis, MN 55404

3. School Administrator(s)

Name: Sarah Wippich
Email: swippich@trinityfirst.org
Phone: (612) 871-2353 x12

4. Pastor(s)

Name: Jon Kuehne
Email: jkuehne@trinityfirst.org
Phone: (612) 871-2353 x19

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.

Carrie Butcher-administrative and support staff
Theresa Farrand-administrative staff
Mary Abban-teacher
Anna Fredrick-teacher
Chrissy Tredray-teacher
Laura Keenan- teacher
Jerry Keenan- teacher
Katie Buckley- teacher
Ian Keim- teacher
Mike Traynor-teacher
Amber Generally-teacher

Andrea Endres- teacher
Amy Weyers- teacher
Cassie Kuehne-support staff
Jon Kuehne-pastor
Anna VanVleet-administrative staff
Sarah Wippich-principal
David Kaisaki-support staff
Andrea Olson- support staff

7. **Attach a copy of the school's most recent *LCMS Early Childhood Center and School Statistical Report*.**

 **October 2023 Statistical Data.pdf**

Community Information

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

1. **Write a brief history of the school.**

[History of Trinity First Lutheran School | Lutheran School Minneapolis \(trinityfirstschool.org\)](#)
[LCEF Demographic Study](#)

2. **Describe the community surrounding the school.**

Trinity First is in the Phillips Neighborhood of Minneapolis. Phillips is the largest neighborhood in the city and is broken down into smaller sections; our ministry is located in what is called Ventura Village, a subsection of the Phillips Neighborhood community. The community surrounding Trinity First is an ever changing population. We have a high rate of immigrant families and low income housing. Many families move into the neighborhood and then move out as housing changes. There is also a high rate of homeless in our neighborhood despite the social service organizations in the area.

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

[MnDOT closes Cedar-Riverside homeless encampment in Minneapolis \(startribune.com\)](#)
[Following deadly shooting, Minneapolis' Ventura Village homeless encampment closure delayed](#)
[Phillips Community Data](#)

School Enrollment Information

1. What is the total current school enrollment?

144 as of 12/8/23

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.

We serve a high need of special education students and many of our students are unchurched.

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

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

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

School Year	Projected Enrollment	Rationale
24-25	150	We are splitting 3rd and 4th into two classes. This will allow us to not limit enrollment for those grades.
25-26	150-155	Enrollment is expected to be maintained at this level as we do not have room to add more classrooms or expand some classrooms to fit a full 20 students. Our enrollment is rarely evenly distributed.
26-27	130-155	see above
27-28	130-155	see above
28-29	130-155	see above

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

With our current building, we have a maximum capacity of 180 students. This is assuming that we would have an enrollment of 20 students for 7 of our classrooms that could potentially handle that number of students and that the remaining 3 classrooms would have an enrollment of 12-15 students each. It is important to note that we also limit enrollment due to the special needs of each class. We do not expect to ever have a maximum capacity as it is described above because we believe that we are here especially for those students with special needs.

We are blessed beyond our square footage. As we begin enrollment for the 24-25 school year, we will have classes that are unable to accommodate more students. We have a total of 5 traditional classrooms, the other classrooms are using space that was designed for other purposes such as a stage.

We limit enrollment in enrollment where space is the limiting factor. We have also limited enrollment when a class size is small so we combine with another grade. However, we are always working to find ways to accommodate the families that come to us. This has prompted us to split 3rd and 4th into two separate classes for next school year. 4th grade is a smaller class (7 students). We strongly desire to not turn away families!

Staff Information – Teachers and Administrators

Teachers and Administrators

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

1. Faculty Member:

[Jon Kuehne](#)

[Cassandra Kuehne](#)

[Chrissy Tredray](#)

[Anna Fredrick](#)

[Katie Griffin](#)

[Mike Traynor](#)

[Ian Keim](#)

[Anna VanVleet](#)

[Mary Abban](#)

[Chrissy Tredray](#)

[Sarah Wippich](#)

[Amber Generally](#)

[Andy Endres](#)

[Amy Weyers](#)

[Laura Keenan](#)

[Katie Buckley](#)

[Jerry Keenan](#)

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>
Theresa Farrand	Administrative Assistant	40	26
Andrea Olson	Food Service	30	24
Lamar Warren	Teacher Aide	40	10
Carolina Sanchez	Teacher Aide	40	4
Aiyda Dawit	Teacher Aide	40	7
Dr. David Kaisaki	LSEM Resource	32	2
Carrie Butcher	Preschool director	40	14

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:

Title Services:

Through Minneapolis Public Schools, our school utilizes Title funding to enhance our ability to serve our students. We use Title 1 funding to provide onsite tutoring in math and reading. We are currently in the process of looking for a new Title 1 teacher as our teacher retired in December of 2023. We also use Title 2 funds to help cover the costs of professional development of our teachers. We encourage and promote professional learning communities with our staff to further our professional development goals. We use Title 4 funds to help cover the cost of supplemental instructional needs of our students.

Transportation:

The Minneapolis Public School Transportation Department offers transportation to our students who live within the boundary allowed to our school. We chose not to accept a morning bus as their schedule doesn't allow for students to arrive at our school until after 10:00 A.M. The afternoon bus arrives at our school about an hour after our school day ends so we allow students who ride the bus to stay in our after-school care program.

Health Services:

Minneapolis Public Schools provides a nurse whose primary job is health screening and the record keeping of student health records. Medication and other medical needs are handled by our school office.

Special Education:

We are blessed to partner with Lutheran Special Education Ministries for our Special Education program. We have two full time LSEM teachers who work to complete special education testing with Minneapolis Public Schools. LSEM provides direct interventions and supports to students on an I.E.P. as well as supportive instruction to those who qualify.

Library Services:

Our students are served by a volunteer librarian who comes in weekly to read to our students and allow them to check out books from our school library. Currently, the process is somewhat hindered due to the move of our library and a complete change in our online library program. This hindrance is expected to be remedied soon.

Our students are also served by the Hennepin County - Franklin Library less than a block away from our school. Our older students go every other week and are allowed to check out books and the library also provides projects for our students to do.

Genesis Virtual Academy: For students who need support that extends beyond our 8th grade curriculum, we utilize GVA to meet those needs. Currently we have 2 students in Geometry.

Custodial Services:

All Source Cleaning provides all our custodial services.

Surveys for School Constituents

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

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

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

In the survey analysis:

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

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

Summarize the survey information in the space below:

Faculty results:

Parent results: 52/89 returned. We did have one family reply 1 for almost every question. We believe that this may be due to a lack of understanding on the part of the parent that filled out the survey. Parents strongly feel that their child’s teacher is highly effective (average 9.44) and would recommend this school (average 9.55) All others scored average in the mid 4’s.

1-3 Grade Student results: 37/45 surveys returned. Overall weakness appears to be in the question about using a computer. While we do have enough devices for all students, they do not use computers every day. We feel this is in line with best practices for this age group. They have plenty of technology available. Another low question result was about feeling safe at school. We believe this is partially due to coming out of the Covid pandemic, and the general nature of where the school is located. Nothing else stood out in the results.

4-8 Grade results: 35/50 surveys returned. One low score was about the school's PR effectiveness. Since our greatest PR tool is word of mouth and we are just about at maximum capacity, we feel not actively advertising has worked well for us. Another low result was regarding if our school is respected in the community. Many of our families live outside the general community. We will continue to assess and see if this trend continues should we have more local families.

Board results: 5/6 surveys returned. Overall the board feels the school has strong leadership. One low score complements what was scored with the 4-8 grades regarding strong PR and social media presence. The leadership team does not feel at this moment it is needed to advertise since we are at near capacity. Another lower score was the relationship between the church and the school. This could be because we do not operate in the traditional Lutheran school model. While board members do have interactions with the congregation members it is limited.

Teacher/Staff results: 12/18 surveys returned. Overall high scores were in the Leadership and Lutheran Identity categories. Lower scores were in the communication and facilities categories. Our facility has always been a struggle as our current building design only has 5 classrooms. This means that teachers teach in nontraditional classrooms (like the Narthex and Cafeteria) or have to move rooms to accommodate the classroom size for that year. For the Communication questions, our lowest scores were in student recruitment and effective PR plan. This will be something to look at later should our enrollment change. As of right now, we do not feel this is fair to advertise when we are near capacity.

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.”

Trinity First Lutheran School’s Vision Statement: Equipping Learners, Sharing Hope

Trinity First Lutheran School will impact our community by being known as a high-quality educational center for children, their families, and our community. We will strive to support and encourage learners to become productive citizens of our country here on earth, and ultimately fellow citizens of Heaven!

Our students and their families will experience this school as a growing family that learns together, supports one another, serves together, and shares the love of Jesus with one another.

Potential Evidence

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

- Written school policies align with philosophy/mission.
- School social media presence and postings align with the school’s purpose.
- School learning objectives align with the school’s purpose.
- School policies align with the school’s purpose.
- The school’s presence in community marketing pieces highlights the school’s purpose.
- School publications, handbooks, marketing materials provide evidence of Lutheran identity.
- Promotional materials give evidence of Lutheran identity.
- School website provides evidence of Lutheran identity.

- School evangelism plan or written document outlining practices of sharing the Gospel in the school and community.
- Christian symbols are appropriately and prominently displayed throughout the school.

Potential Practices

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

- Teachers recognize and verbalize that the teaching of the faith is the main purpose of the school.
- Teaching of the Lutheran faith is allocated with appropriate classroom time in the daily schedule and integrated throughout the curriculum.
- The school 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 unchurched or marginally churched children and their families attending the school.
- The Lutheran school's policies, programs and life within the school emanate from the example and teachings of Jesus Christ and demonstrate the proper understanding of Law and Gospel.
- The school conducts weekly worship (chapel) experiences intentionally designed to consciously and systematically strengthen the Christian faith of all members of the school community.
- Co-curricular and extra-curricular activities enhance the school's purpose.
- Part-time employees and volunteer coaches, directors and extra-curricular adult leaders embody and reflect the school's purpose.
- Service projects are informed by the school's purpose.

Required Responses

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

1. How was the school's purpose developed?

- Trinity First Lutheran School began in 1859 when the congregation (established in 1856) asked the pastor to teach school. Such a quiet, simple beginning ignited a passion for education that has continued for over 160 years! Although the school did close for about 6 years during the depression, the desire to provide a Christian education did not diminish.
- Over the decades there have been many changes at TFS. The faces of the student body were mostly all white until the 1960's. Now our classrooms are filled with a rich mosaic of racial and ethnic diversity. Funded by the congregation and its families through nearly all of its existence, the school now is funded almost entirely by outside donations. The purpose of the school at its beginning was to teach the children of the congregation how to read so they could read the Bible. Now, the focus has changed to reaching all children, offering them a solid Christ-based education that is designed to equip them for life here on earth and our life beyond.
- The congregation, faculty and pastoral staff developed our Trinity First Lutheran School's [mission statement](#): "Equipping Learners, Sharing Hope."

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

Trinity First School align with these beliefs also held by our supporting congregations:

- **Bible:** The Bible, both Old and New Testaments, are directly inspired by God. It is the only infallible, free from all error, authoritative Word of God. 2 Peter 1:20-21, 1 Corinthians 2:10-13
- **Trinity:** We believe there is one God, eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit and that through Jesus' perfect life on earth and innocent death and resurrection, we now have been made God's children and have received our salvation! Genesis 1:1, Matthew 28:19, John 10:30, Luke 5:32, Isaiah 53:5, John 3:16
- **Creation:** We believe the Genesis account of a six-day creation; we believe man was created directly in God's image and after His own likeness, and not by evolution.
- **Salvation:** We believe that salvation is by the grace of God, not by any works or good deeds of men. Ephesians 2:8-9
- **Body of Christ:** We believe in the spiritual unity of believers in the Greater Body of Christ. Romans 8:10-11, I Corinthians 12:12-31, Galatians 3:26-28

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

- Our current purpose was fashioned during a meeting funded by an organization connected to LCEF back in the early 2000's. Since the eighties, it became very apparent that our mission was to be outreach, that we existed not just to support the children of neighboring congregations but to reach out into the neighborhood to share Christ with unchurched families and their children. In August of every year during our staff orientation, we discuss and clarify the school's purpose, vision, and values. We review existing information found on the website and other documents, confirm it is still accurate, then create a singular document for clear, concise communication. Our

school's purpose is communicated in the school newsletter, on the website, and posted outside every classroom.

- We are strongly led by our mission of “Equipping Learners, Sharing Hope” and the belief that everything we do, say, and think must match that. We take leaps of faith to stick to our mission, and any program or activity or philosophy that doesn't align with our purpose is let go.
- Our most recent review of our mission was August 7th, 2023 when we drew up goals for professional development and student engagement.
- Teachers were anonymously surveyed for accountability and to ensure integrity to our school's purpose.

Results can be seen here [teacher survey](#)

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

- Our school's vision is embedded in our philosophy statement and is identified within the five main areas of Education, Relationships, Evangelism, Fellowship, and Service. These five core values enable the staff to accomplish our mission.
- [TFL Core Beliefs](#)

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

- The school's purpose informs its strategic plan by daily lesson plans, curriculum, and schedules.

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

Trinity First School abides by these beliefs as stated on our [website](#).

- God's Word and sound Lutheran Doctrine is implemented in daily activities in all subject areas.
 - [Lesson Plans](#)
 - [Schedules](#)
 - [Words and Symbols Around the School](#)
 - [Classroom Newsletters](#)
 - [Student Religious Work](#)
 - [School Newsletters](#)
 - Strong Academic Foundation
 - Our student body (K5 through 8th grade) is screened three times a year using the **NWEA MAP ASSESSMENT**.
- Our goal is to equip students to lead their lives as God's children in this world where He puts them, and also be equipped to carry out Christ's command to “make disciples of all nations.”
- Daily religion classroom teaching includes differentiating Law and Gospel and application to daily life. [Link to Religion Objectives](#)
- [Daily closing](#) at the end of the day gives us time to praise the Lord and reflect on the day together as a school body. We give prayer requests and end with [Luther's evening prayer](#). Every day, students hear about the love of God and are pointed to Him. Oftentimes, students jump at the chance to lead songs or the prayer, and we encourage that as they are being models for the younger students. We were even able to find a way to continue this tradition during times when we were in [distance learning](#).
- [Littles \(K3-K5\)](#) gather for chapel every Tuesday morning in the Sanctuary. Big (Grades 1-8) gather for chapel every Thursday in the Sanctuary and hear messages from Pastor Jon. Monthly, each class also takes a turn [leading chapels](#), from the 3-year-old class to the 8th grade class. Again, this helps students practice sharing their faith and intentionally encouraging one another-- a good practice for

discipleship.

- From time to time we witness baptisms during chapel as well. From 2020-2023 we had over 15 baptisms of students and their family members. [Baptism Photo](#)
- We also collect offerings during chapel. Teaching children to be good stewards and generous givers of what God has given them is an important part of discipleship.
- Students are able to opt into Catechism Instruction with Pastor Jon. Students meet once a week with Pastor Jon and complete personal work in partnership with a spiritual mentor and family members. Starting in 5th grade, students can take a First Communion class. This class will launch in the spring of 2024 and happen on a bi-yearly basis. Students do not have to be [confirmed](#) to receive Communion.
- We have two student-led worship teams. These students learn the musical skills to lead our school in worship with hope that one day they will become church leaders. We expect Worship Team members to not only lead songs, but to reflect Christ's love in the way they conduct themselves. Our Worship Teams lead songs during chapel and daily closings as well as leading worship at outreach events like the Fall Festival and Community Family Fair. In 2019 our worship team was asked to sing as part of the National Youth Gathering [Worship Team](#)
- Our choir sings 3-4 times per year at area churches. Some years are less than others. The total number depends on who invites us to sing. This supports the goal to equip students to carry out Christ's command to "make disciples of all nations" through music.
 - [Choir Trip to Family of Christ Lutheran Church](#)
 - [Worship Team at Faith Lutheran Church](#)
- [Talent Show](#) helps students learn and recognize their God given talents and perform for their parents and school community.
- [Love our City](#)- In the wake of the riots in Minneapolis, our local grocery store closed its doors to prevent looting. This prompted our Administration team to look into what we could do to meet the needs of our community. In less than 24 hours, we organized a [food & supply drive](#). This included prayer walks and [distribution](#) of [hundreds](#) of pounds of [food](#), diapers, household cleaning supplies. The [response from the community](#) and donors was so great that we did a second event the following weekend and continued to distribute items for many weeks following.
- [Christmas service](#) is the students' opportunity to share the story of Jesus' birth with parents and community. All students sing songs throughout the service and some older students have speaking parts.
- The [school musical](#) is a two day performance where students perform four shows at Concordia University. The performances are highly attended by family, friends, donors of TFL, community members, and other Lutheran schools. All students sing songs and learn actions; while, older students have speaking parts and solos. All of our musicals are based on Biblical accounts and include original scripts written by Terri Bentz and music by Rev Tom Gundermann.

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

- The use of centers and recess time provide authentic learning opportunities to learn through play. Students build their problem solving and social skills with teacher guidance as needed.
- [Family Nights](#), [Kinder Family Play Events](#), and [Bible Studies](#) offer opportunities for parents and families to come together and establish our school community. Each meet 1 time a month, giving 3 opportunities each month for families to come together.

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

- Students at Trinity First have needs that are met with the schedules and procedures put in place for their learning and growth, especially for ELL, ESL and students with special education needs. Treehouse, including Title 1, is the special education department servicing our students with various special education needs. We have staff that are fluent in Spanish, Mandarin, and Amharic.
- 8. Describe the process used to inform new employees about the school's purpose and the appropriate engagement employees are expected and encouraged to model.**
- All TFL professional staff have a contract & supplement to the diploma of vocation that insist on agreement with the school purpose (HR: Anna VanVleet) Non synodically trained teachers (or those who are not eligible for a call) must sign a [Faith & Life Covenant](#).
 - All teachers are required to attend all staff meetings each school year regarding our Staff Handbook and Parent Handbook. Our Staff Handbook lays out the appropriate engagement employees are expected and encouraged to model.
 - Our yearly Staff Retreat provides time for new teachers to read [Faculty](#) and [Parent](#) Handbooks that inform employees about the school's purpose.
 - We also utilize a [Mentorship Program](#) that helps onboard new teachers and staff.

Required Evidence

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

Final School Action Plan from the previous accreditation (if applicable)

X

Strategic Plan (if applicable and currently utilized by the school)

X

Written purpose/philosophy/mission statement

X

- [Trinity First NLSA Action Plan](#)
- The following philosophy/mission statement is found throughout the school, on the school website and entrance and in handbooks and parent information.
 - The [mission of Trinity First](#) is to impact our community by being known as a high-quality educational center for children, their families, and our community. We will strive to support and encourage learners to become productive citizens of our country here on earth, and ultimately fellow citizens of Heaven! Our students and their families will experience this school as a growing family that learns together, supports one another, serves together, and shares the love of Jesus with one another.
- Purpose/School Values
 - Sound Lutheran Doctrine – As a Lutheran School, our primary job is to teach our students God’s truth. We base our teachings on the LCMS doctrine, and it is carefully taught to all students so they are sure of what they believe and can defend their faith. Children are taught the demands of God’s law and are comforted by the saving Gospel of Jesus. Our small class sizes ensure quality education and individual attention from teachers and aides. Our teachers strive to show Christ’s love and forgiveness to each child. We believe that begins with building strong relationships. In July or August every year, each class (K-8th) has a “Meet the Teacher” Day. This is a fun day for students, parents, and teachers to build a good relationship and share information about the upcoming school year.
 - High Level of Instruction – Students at Trinity First are expected to work hard. This creates a culture of high expectations. Using their God-given abilities, students and teachers strive for excellence as they use effective, up-to-date learning and teaching materials. Students are prepared to become responsible stewards of their talents in a joy-filled Christian life.
 - Friendship and Acceptance – Students and staff accept one another as fellow members of the body of Christ. They play together, support each other, encourage each other and witness to one another. Each person’s uniqueness is recognized and individuals are helped to achieve their full potential. Each child knows that he or she is valued, accepted, and a respected part of the school community.
- Short Mission Statement: “Equipping Learners, Sharing Hope”
- [TFLS Vision](#) and [Building Expansion 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.

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:

[Mission Statement and Core Values](#)

Comments:

The desire of Trinity First Lutheran School is that we see each child that comes through our doors again someday in heaven. The mission statement reflects such desire.

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

YES

NO

Identify and list supporting Evidence or Practices:

[Staff Survey Results](#)

Comments:

The mission statement is posted throughout the building and in every classroom.

General Indicators of Success

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

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

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:

- School Values & Mission: listed on our [Website](#)
 - School publications and handbooks provide evidence of Lutheran identity.
 - Stand in the Gap- volunteer email asking for specific prayers and request for our school families and our staff.
 - Volunteer Newsletter is emailed out monthly by Trinity First’s Volunteer Coordinator including updates, pictures, requests and consistent communication.
 - [Parent Handbook](#)
 - [Faculty Handbook](#)
 - [Promotional materials](#) give evidence of Lutheran identity.
 - [School Outreach & Evangelism plan is written.](#)
 - Written school policies align with philosophy/mission.
 - [Parent Handbook](#) begins with the purpose & mission of Trinity First.
 - [School website provides evidence of Lutheran identity](#) with the Trinity First Lutheran School logo, mission and values, and mission statement “Equipping Learners, Sharing Hope”. Trinity First School, located in the heart of Minneapolis, is blessed to serve God by providing a Christ-based education to children through the eighth grade. We see ourselves as a family and joyfully give thanks to God for each child He leads to our school.
 - Connected to the [Church’s mission](#): We are seen as the mission of Trinity First Lutheran Church. Their mission statement is *Meeting Needs, Sharing Christ*.

Comments:

Trinity First values and lives out its mission, *Equipping Learners, Sharing Hope*. Trinity First School is blessed to serve God by providing a Christ-based education to children through the eighth grade. We see ourselves as a family and joyfully give thanks to God for each child He leads to our school.

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:

- All TFL professional staff have a contract & supplement to the diploma of vocation that insist on agreement with the school purpose (HR: Anna VanVleet)
- All teachers are required to attend all staff meetings throughout each school year regarding our scheduling and sharing of general and targeted information for the time.
- Each [August we begin with staff meetings for orientation](#) that include going over our Staff Handbook and Parent Handbook. Our Staff Handbook lays out the appropriate engagement employees are expected and encouraged to model.
- Our yearly Staff Retreat provides time for all our teachers (new and returning) to read through our [Faculty](#) and [Parent](#) Handbooks, and time for orienting our workers about the school’s guidelines, functions, policies, and purpose. However, our retreat is especially directed toward bonding/uniting us as a staff so that we are united in love and purpose!

Teachers recognize and verbalize that the teaching of the faith is the main purpose of the school.

- Regular attendance of Church, bi-weekly devotions and weekly faculty Bible study. [Photo](#)
- Lead devotions and prayer daily in the classroom
- Serve on various church boards and committees
- Attend Lutheran conferences and workshops held by our district and Synod
- Membership in LEA
- Serving on committees and boards for the district and Synod
 - Two teachers were members of two different National Youth Gathering Committees. Also Anna Vanvleet and Chrissy Tredray supplied a [Trinity First student](#) to be a main actor in the 2019 NYG in Minneapolis. Our School [Worship Team](#) participated in the 2019 NYG as well.

- [Bible verses and crosses displayed around the school and classrooms.](#)
- Participation in service projects
 - Neighborhood clean-up done by Boys' and Girls' Club
 - Singing at [nursing homes](#) (Normally we would sing every year; however, Covid-19 we have not been able to)
 - It is allocated with appropriate classroom time in the daily schedule and integrated throughout the curriculum.
- [Link to daily schedules](#)
- [Written curriculum](#)

The school attempts to attain and retain a positive Christian image through its public relations and publications.

- Stand in the Gap- prayer emails, volunteer newsletter, [Reaching Up, Reaching Up Reaching Out donor newsletter.](#)
- Trinity First Lutheran School's [Website](#)

The sponsoring congregation(s) provide(s) spiritual support for the school and its students.

- [Chapel Schedules](#): We celebrate chapel each week on either Tuesday or Thursday mornings led by Pastor Jon. Each class leads all school chapel once a month. ([chapel](#))
- Pastors visit sick family members even if they are not members of the congregation (unable to do this as of part of our ministry at this time due to COVID).
- Supporting congregations pray for teachers, support staff and school families.
- Supporting congregations invite the administrator and Pastor Jon to speak during adult Bible study time about supporting the mission of the school.
- Sponsoring congregations supply meals for family nights, Pizza Fridays for K3/K4 students, and lunches during Summer Bridge.
- Many members of sponsoring congregations are volunteers during the school day, Tiger Club, and Summer Bridge program. [Volunteers](#)

Teachers and staff members seek to be instruments of the Holy Spirit in helping students develop and grow in their relationship with Jesus Christ.

- Teachers provide time in all curriculum areas to help students grow in their relationship with Jesus Christ.
- Teachers provide opportunities for students to participate in devotions, prayer, chapel and all school church services. [Student Chapel](#)
- Teachers provide opportunities for students to help others in the community in the name of the Lord, Jesus Christ.
- Faculty are trained in Lutheran Doctrine both in college and during Bible Study led by our own pastor and are able to use this training to help students develop and grow in their relationship with Jesus Christ.

Comments:

Core Beliefs are listed on the school website, under tabs "About Us" and "Our Mission & Values":

[Trinity First Website](#)

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:

- Bible verses and religious symbols displayed in classrooms around the school. ([photos](#))
- Appropriate seasonal decorations are displayed. ([Christmas photos](#))
- School website displaying this year’s theme Bible verse. ([website](#))
- Website tab about “Mission & Values” and also “Core Beliefs” outlines in detail our main doctrines that we teach with Scriptural reference for each. ([website tab](#))
- Teachers communicate with parents on a weekly basis with classroom newsletters. These newsletters include the students’ memory verses. ([classroom newsletters](#))
- [Promotional materials](#) give evidence of Lutheran identity.
- School logo includes a cross to show that faith is a priority at our school. ([logo](#))
- The parent handbook clearly outlines our purpose and mission. ([parent handbook](#))
- The school attempts to attain and retain a positive Christian image through its public relations and publications.
 - [Stand in the Gap](#)- prayer emails, volunteer newsletter, [Reaching Up, Reaching Up Reaching Out](#) donor newsletter.
- Events:
 - Bible-based school musical ([photos](#))

- Choir events: we visit local churches with our school choir as a way of saying thank you for their partnership and also to mutually encourage parishioners in their faith as they have encouraged us through their support and service. ([photos](#))
- Chapels: The school conducts weekly worship experiences intentionally designed to consciously and systematically strengthen the Christian faith of all members of the school community. ([photos](#))
 - Hymns and worship songs are sung at all chapel services; the invocation, The Lord's Prayer is said and a blessing is given during each service.
 - Each class is given the opportunity to lead a chapel during the year. ([Student-led chapels](#))
- A Talent Show during National Lutheran Schools Week gives us an opportunity to fellowship and praise the Lord together. This year in place of a talent show, the school hosted an [illusionist](#) that focused on prayer.
- Service Projects: TFL provides opportunities for students to leave the four walls of the school and to be the hands and feet of Jesus in their community. We also invite the community to us for outreach events. Prayer, service, fellowship, and worship are consistent elements in all of our events.
 - Neighborhood Clean Up done by Boys' and Girls Club
 - Annual caroling at a local nursing home ([photos](#)) (Have not been able to do it recently due to COVID)
- The [daily schedule](#) for each class includes studying God's Word on a regular basis.
- Bible curriculum is also scrutinized to give students a broad and comprehensive scope of God's word. ([Bible curriculum](#))
- Discipline: 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.
 - Trinity First School policies begin with the school mission and value statements.
 - Our pastor and teachers teach the proper understanding of Law and Gospel throughout the day, during chapel, and in religion classes.
 - Programs and life within the school proclaim the teachings of Jesus Christ. The Law and the Gospel pervade relationships so that each person knows he or she is a redeemed sinner and beloved child of God.
 - Through the Love and Logic discipline policy teachers and students work together to maintain a classroom atmosphere of respect, love and joy. Our parents are also taught this method through our Parent Education Classes head twice a month.

Comments:

This year's theme along with the school's mission statement is posted throughout the building and in each classroom in a prominent location.

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:

- Staff handbook addresses the school’s purpose. ([handbook](#))
- Staff goes through orientation every August to study the handbooks and policies for effective function of the school. ([orientation certificate](#))
- [Mentor Program](#)
- [Faith & Life Covenant](#) (non synodical workers)

Comments:

Colleague mentors happen on a much more natural, organic level and are not officially assigned to new staff. Our staff environment is encouraging and functions well as a team, helping to bring new staff members on board with us. Each new teacher is assigned a mentor and we utilize our [mentorship monthly checklist](#).

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)

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

The school's mission is the drive to reach all students with the life saving message of the Gospel. The education provided is the tool to accomplish the mission. While we plan for the future, we tend to be a reactive ministry to meet the needs of our students and families. One of the best examples of this was the [Love Our City](#) project that came out of response to the riots in Minneapolis in the summer of 2020.

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 have found it challenging to find qualified Lutheran educators. While we encourage colloquy, only one former staff member has taken advantage of it.

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

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

STANDARD 2: RELATIONSHIPS

The school demonstrates its purpose through relationships.

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

STANDARD 2A: SCHOOL AND CONGREGATION

Overview

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

Potential Evidence

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

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

Potential Practices

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

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

Required Responses

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

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

The church and school consider themselves one body with many parts. There is one weekly service on Sunday morning and there are two [weekly chapel services](#) during the week: Tuesday morning (preschool and kindergarten classes) Thursday morning (1st grade - 8th grade students). Once a month we have special services on Sunday mornings where students help lead worship, or sing songs. It is also the day we will schedule [baptisms](#) and confirmation. The church members are very encouraged when our students come and [sing for church on Sunday mornings](#). At school we have special services once a month where each [class gets a turn to lead Chapel for the school](#). We also have a small closing service at the end of each school day where parents are welcome to join us before they pick their children up for the day.

Every year we have an [Annual Meeting](#) that takes place right after a Sunday Church service. This is a time for the school faculty and staff to further strengthen the relationships between the church and the school. This is especially important for the elderly members (most of the Sunday morning group) who cannot get involved personally during the school day.

While our students may not go to church here every Sunday morning, our students know the [church members](#) who spend their time and talents helping around the school and volunteering their time in the building during school hours.

One final way that our school works to strengthen the relationship we have with the church is by taking time to [decorate the sanctuary for Christmas](#) and Holy Week. This year we had a great collaboration between multiple teachers and classrooms to help decorate our sanctuary for Christmas.

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

Prior to us calling a campus pastor in 2021, we had many opportunities for pastors of our metro LCMS congregations to help out our school and be involved. Our own congregation has less than 15 people on an average Sunday and had been operating as a church with visiting pastors. During the 2020 COVID shutdown, when we switched to online learning, [we invited supporting pastors to record messages for our students' for chapel services](#).

It was during the isolating and challenging times of Covid and the [George Floyd riots](#) that isolated in fear so many of our families and our neighborhood, that we realized we deeply needed a campus pastor to minister to our students, their families, our staff and our neighborhood.

In January of 2021 Pastor Jon Kuehne accepted the call to be our campus pastor. He began [teaching religion classes to our 3rd - 8th grade students](#), leading boys club for our 3rd - 8th grade students, teaching confirmation, first communion, and baptism classes, leading bible studies for

parents, leading weekly chapel services and Sunday morning worship services, leading our staff devotions every Thursday morning and ensuring that all staff members are properly installed. He also offers counseling to families and church members when needed, and he participates in our back to school nights, our graduation service, our spring musical, and he is an integral part of facilitating relationships in our community.

Since Pastor Jon has been called here, our need to lean on other pastors has decreased, but they still come to our school on occasion to help with special events and service opportunities such as: serving lunch to our students, [helping out with service projects](#), stepping in to sub or lead chapel if Pastor Jon is gone.

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

Throughout the school year our students sing at our Sunday morning worship services and they also [sing at other supporting churches](#). During the Christmas season and during Holy Week, students help to create decorations and banners for the sanctuary.

We share volunteer opportunities with our supporting church! We are blessed to have many volunteers from many different churches and organizations tutoring students, helping in the office, playing during recess in classrooms, serving food at lunch and helping out at our family night events. They also help to chaperone students on field trips during our summer programming. Our students create and send notes as a way of saying thank you to everyone that comes through our doors or supports us from afar.

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

Trinity First School is used and seen as an outreach ministry so we work with families to help get them connected to our church by giving families tuition credit for participating in Sunday worship when our kids sing for church or lead church on Sunday mornings.

If families are looking for a church that might be closer to where they live, Pastor Jon helps assist families in giving them recommendations of churches in their area.

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

Our Pastor Jon Kuehne, is a called and ordained pastor of the LCMS. Our Teachers attend LEA Convocation when we are able to attend (depending on location of the conference). The school utilizes the support of our district office to hire new teachers and receive other support as well, and the MNSD salary guidelines are used as a framework and foundation for computing salaries and benefits. We have teachers who have served on NSLA visiting teams and staff members who have volunteered and served for the National Youth Gathering. In 2019, we helped the National Youth Gathering Committee by finding a [student to be an actor](#) for the [mass gathering](#) (5:50). Our student-led [worship team](#) was also asked to play as part of the National Youth Gathering. We also ensure that all required forms and statistics are reported to the district and synodical offices in a timely manner.

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

All teachers are encouraged to attend the MN South teachers conference and other events and in-services as they are offered. All our early childhood teachers attend the Early Childhood conference at Concordia St. Paul. When feasible, we have our teachers attend the LEA Convocation. All members of our Administration team attend Region I meetings, and all teachers attend in-service training sessions and workshops to earn continuing education credits for their licenses. In 2020 two teachers were able to attend [Best Practices](#) and the LEA Administrators Conference.

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

All called workers are encouraged to attend the MN South teachers conference and our school pays for all teachers and called workers to attend the MN South conference. Our early childhood teachers, who are called, attend the Early Childhood conference at Concordia St. Paul. All called workers are encouraged to attend the LEA Convocation. Called workers on our Administration team attend Region I meetings. Chrissy Tredray, who is currently our 7th and 8th grade teacher, has served on two different NSLA visiting teams. Chrissy Tredray has completed the SLED program and has had meetings at the International Center. Sarah Wippich, our school principal, worked under Carl Moser and Bill Cochran for over five years as part of a group focused on studying and supporting LCMS urban education. These relationships throughout the LCMS continue to be beneficial. Our Pastor, Jon Kuehne, is a called and ordained pastor of the LCMS and attends MN South Pastors conferences and district meetings.

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

Our school supports the work of the LCMS by teaching Missouri Synod Doctrine and by using curriculum published by CPH.

Our yearly chapel offerings have also helped support mission work through organizations such as Camp Omega and Lutheran Bible Translators.

Our school supports the training of Lutheran classrooms teachers through having student teachers and other classroom visitation requirements.

Our principal, pastor, and support administration share the mission and work of our school to other LCMS churches and organizations to encourage, equip, and unite us in serving together for the Great Commission.

Required Indicator of Success

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

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

YES

NO

Identify and list supporting Evidence or Practices:

- [Trinity First Constitution and ByLaws](#)
- [Trinity First Flow Chart](#)
- [School Calendar](#)
- [Church Bulletins](#)
- [Annual Meeting Agenda](#)
- [Teacher & Staff Handbook](#)
- [Kids Singing at Church](#)
- [Parent Surveys on worship](#)
- [NLSA Parent Surveys](#)

Comments:

Trinity First Lutheran School operates under Trinity First Lutheran Congregation. Pastor Jon does an amazing job to meet the spiritual needs of the students, parents, and congregational members of Trinity First.

General Indicators of Success

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

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

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:

- [Church Constitution and ByLaws](#)
- [Chapel Services](#)
- Worship Services- [Kids Singing](#) in Church, [Church Bulletins](#)
- [Baptisms](#)
- [Annual Meeting](#)
- Church Outreach plan
 - Our current outreach plan is to work directly with the parents and families at our school, because roughly 50% of our student body is not connected to a church. Pastor Jon has implemented [bible studies](#) on an [annual schedule](#) for families, intentional worship services for families, and provided an inviting environment for families where they can feel more comfortable to ask questions and learn about faith with others in the school community.

Comments:

Trinity First Church and School both see the School as the Church’s largest mission. Pastor Jon is the spiritual leader for both the Church and School.

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:

- [Participation in National Lutheran Schools Week](#)
- Participation in [Worship Services at Trinity First](#) and other [supporting congregations](#)
- Opportunities for school families to engage in faith building activities and [bible studies](#)
- [Monetary supports to Pastor Otronyi in South Africa with Lutheran Bible Translators](#)
- [Pastor Jon and Sarah Wippich have participated and spoke at different LWML events](#)
- [Monetary Supports to Samaritan's Purse](#)
- Called teachers attend [Minnesota South](#) District Conferences and events

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 2A? (YES / NO)

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

The Trinity First Congregation sees the school as the church's greatest mission. The school is actively caring for the congregation as it cares for the facility. Our campus pastor works to meet the spiritual needs of the church and school.

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.

Since we have completed our last NLSA evaluation in 2019 we feel we have made great improvements in the school's relationship with its congregation, its ministry as a whole, and its engagement with the district and national church body. Certainly a significant part of this improvement was our call to Pastor Jon Kuehne. He has been able to make the spiritual well being of our school, church, and staff his number one priority because we are his only call. We have been able to focus our efforts on growing the faith lives of our students, families, and greater community through his efforts and direction.

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

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

STANDARD 2B: SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY

Overview

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

Potential Evidence

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

- A sampling of public relations materials
 - [School Website](#)
 - [Newsletter](#)
 - [Stand in the Gap Emails](#)
- School enrollment policy (see [Admissions-Registration](#)) copied from Parent Handbook
- List of [Parent Education Programs](#)
- Constitution, [Bylaws](#), organizational and/or [Flow Chart of Organization](#)
- [Parent and Student Handbooks](#)
- Parent Education Resources
 - [Kinder Family Nights](#)
 - [Bible Studies](#)
 - [Parent Education Nights](#)
 - Family Fun Events (teaching families how to have fun and interact with one another)
 - [Game Nights](#)
 - [Fall Festival](#)
 - [SBS dinner events](#)
 - [Thanksgiving Meal](#)
- [Written guidance for volunteers serving in the school](#)
- Student involvement in [Community Activities](#)
- [Calendar](#) and schedule of building use
- [Providing families with meals](#)
- List of class field trips to community resource centers
 - [Students Delivering Food to a Food Shelf](#)

- [Franklin Library](#)
- [DinoMites](#)
- 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?

Race/Ethnicity	mncompass.org	Trinity First Lutheran School
White	21.5%	30%
African American	41.4%	71%
Native American	5.1%	10%
Asian	2%	0%
Hispanic or Latino	24.8%	15%
Two or more races	4.3%	15%

- The neighborhood surrounding Trinity First is the most diverse place in the United States.

- We are as diverse as the community surrounding us.
- 31 / 90 families commute from outside of the city of Minneapolis to attend our school.

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

- Pastor Jon attends Ventura Village meetings
- [Trinity First Marketing](#)
- [Trinity First School Facebook Page](#)
- [Outdoor Banner](#)
- [Stand in the Gap](#) prayer email
- [Reaching Up, Reaching Out](#) donor newsletter
- [church presentations](#)
- [Hiring Local Artists](#)
- [Annual Report](#) sent to stakeholders

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

- [Pick up trash in the community](#)
- Students collect food and deliver it to Community Emergency Services ([food shelf](#)) which is right across the street from Trinity First
- [Love Our City](#)-response to 2020 riots where our local grocery store shuttered its doors leaving the community without access to food. The school organized a massive food drive that included fresh produce, canned items, diapers, cleaning supplies and personal hygiene items to meet the needs of the community including our own school families. Car loads of volunteers from our Metro LCMS congregations came down to help staff and supply this event that served 100s of our neighbors in our community. The support from this event was humbling and overwhelming. It was so positively received that we had a second event the following week.
- Partner with New Life Family Services to do a [diaper drive](#)
- Work with Community Emergency Services (CEF) and [gather supplies](#) that they need
- Grow a [Community Garden](#). When produce is ready it is offered to people in the community.
- Our older students walk to the [Franklin Public Library](#) to attend classes and get library books
- Our first and second grade classes participated in a program called "DinoMites" where they learned to [play hockey](#)

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

- We have a functional working relationship with Minneapolis Public Schools (MPS) in regards to our special education needs.
 - MPS provides testing and indirect services for children that qualify and their parents accept all services that are offered by MPS
 - MPS observes and tests students at our school building when needed
 - Teachers communicate and collaborate with Special Education teachers in MPS in regards to students who need testing, are on IEPs, and need speech
 - Teachers attend IEP meetings
 - MPS supplies bussing in the afternoon for students

- Trinity First provides student records to the many schools that students enroll in after leaving TFL
- TFL Administrative staff attends annual meetings with MPS to review benefits and services
- Title I Participation
- Title II Participation

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

- Pastor Jon attends the Ventura Village meetings.
- Our faculty participate in local and national elections.
- During the [riots](#) in Minneapolis, our school put together a large event called [Love Our City](#) to provide for the needs of our neighbors. Due to the riots, stores and transportation shut down. Our community experienced a type of food & supply desert. With only 24 hours to prepare, we communicated to our wide network of churches and organizations to host this event. We held the event in the parking lot of the school. There were truck loads of food, health supplies, household cleaning supplies, and more that families in the community were able to receive while stores were closed and the city was basically shut down. ([photos photo photo](#)) By the afternoon teams of people were driving out to the suburbs to get more needed items as our neighborhood flocked to this event. Over the course of the following weeks we continued to distribute needed items especially diapers and personal hygiene items.
- School Board members and congregation members volunteer with Holy Trinity who hold a homeless ministry in our school parking lot on Saturday afternoons.
- Many staff members are a part of the [Kids In Need Foundation](#) where they can either donate classroom supplies or receive classroom supplies if they are in need.

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

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:

[Nondiscrimination statement-website](#)

[Parent Handbook](#) page 5

Comments: Our nondiscrimination statement is provided to parents in our school handbook and on our website and [promotional materials](#).

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:

- [School Handbook](#)
- Demographics chart (see above in Narrative)
- [Culture dress up days](#) During National Lutheran Schools Week we offer dress-up days. One of them is always *Dress Your Culture*. On occasion we also have a family potlucks and encourage our families to bring dishes that represent their culture.
- [Parent Participation Program](#) is our tuition program. We desire to serve all families that God sends to our door. Many of our families could not hope to afford the tuition necessary to fund our school or even half of it. We also recognize that our students’ parents are the most important influence and instructor of their children! Thus we offer this Parent Participation Program as a way to remove any financial barriers that may exist AND allows us to influence and instruct the parents!
- [Perspective Parent enrollment checklist form](#)
- Bilingual staff who help with [translation](#) with parents and students in Spanish and Amharic. Our flyers are translated into these languages whenever possible.
- We use the [Remind App](#) which allows for messages to be sent and received in the language preference of the family.
- We enjoy learning and singing and teaching [songs](#) in multiple languages.
- Culturally inclusive [classrooms](#) and [teaching materials](#)

Comments:

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:

- Community Emergency Services (food shelf) [Food Drive](#)
- [Partnership with New Life Family Services](#)
- [Franklin Hennepin County Public Library - community programs & activities](#)
- [Philips Neighborhood Community Center](#)
- [DinoMites Hockey Program](#)
- [Community Garden](#)

Comments:

Trinity First works hard to intentionally create opportunities for students to be active in the community. We teach that we serve God by serving others.

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:

- List of [parent education programs](#)
- [Providing families with meals](#)
- Parent Education Resources
 - [Kinder Family Nights](#)
 - [Bible Studies](#)
 - [Parent Education Nights](#)
 - Family Fun Events (teaching families how to have fun and interact with one another)
 - [Game Nights](#)
 - [Fall Festival](#)
 - [SBS dinner events](#)
 - [Thanksgiving Meal](#)
- [Stand in the Gap Email to donors, Volunteers, and supporters of the school](#)
- [Reaching up Reaching Out Newsletters to donors, volunteers and supporters of the school](#)

Comments: While we do not have a traditional Parent Teacher League or Booster Club, the staff works hard to intentionally create positive parent teacher relationships.

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:

- [Students delivering food to a food shelf](#)
- [Fire Department](#)
- [Police Officer](#)
- [Franklin Public Library email](#)
- [Saturday Homeless Ministry](#)

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 2B? (YES / NO)

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

Trinity First has been part of this community since 1856. The school has worked hard to maintain a positive perception in the community. While the demographics around the school continue to change, the school strives to connect with the people and the families in the community so the population reflects the diversity in the community of which our school serves. While families may read on our website or any printed information that we do not discriminate for any reason, the goal is for all families to actually feel that and experience that when they walk in the doors of this school.

Once families walk in the doors of Trinity First, we want to be sure that they are not discouraged or turned away for fear of not being able to pay tuition for their children to attend. Therefore, the school has become creative in finding ways to keep the cost of tuition low for families so they can actually afford to send their children to school here. This is possible because of the donors, volunteers, and financial supporters of the school. While we do not have a parent teacher organization or a booster club, it is our donors, volunteers, and financial supporters who pray for us and get their information through weekly Stand in the Gap emails that Pastor Jon sends out, and quarterly newsletters, "Reaching Up Reaching Out" that keep all of these individuals up to date on the praises and requests of our school.

Trinity First is located in the middle of Minneapolis very close to the downtown area. We have a wonderful opportunity to teach our students how to minister to those around us safely. We partake in helping stock the food shelf next door and cleaning up the community in which we live. Older classes go on fieldtrips to our local library and community center regularly to build connections with people and programs in our community.

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.

In the ratings we have come up with, we did not identify any areas as a one or two. However, one area that we are lacking is we do not have a Parent Teacher League or a Booster Club. All of the typical responsibilities that a parent organization would do is either done by our teachers, administration, or by volunteers. The reason for this is that we work with many families that are not a part of the faith community and have significant challenges related to healthy parenting and conflict resolution.

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

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

STANDARD 2C: SCHOOL CLIMATE

Overview

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

Potential Evidence

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

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

Potential Practices

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

- All types of school relationships emanate from the example of the teachings of Jesus Christ and demonstrate the proper understanding of Law and Gospel.
- Teachers' decision-making is centered on what is best for students.
- Regular school chapel services are intentionally designed to consciously and systematically strengthen the Christian faith of students and members of the school community.
- The school staff work cooperatively with area pastors and church workers to meet the spiritual needs of school families during times of celebration, times of crisis and day-to-day life events.
- Pastoral and school staff work cooperatively to meet the spiritual needs of school families.
- Home visits
- Parent/Teacher Conferences
- Student-led conferences

Required Responses

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

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

Trinity First is more than an assembly of people. Trinity First is a community that teaches anyone who walks through the doors that they are redeemed and forgiven by God. The people of Trinity First are motivated by Christ's love because God loved us first. That love allows us to then go out and love others the way that God would want them to be loved. The students and families of Trinity First recognize, value, and respect the needs of others for acceptance, love, correction, approval, and attention. Therefore, everything that is done at Trinity First helps students and families see and experience God's love and forgiveness.

The mission statement of the school is "Equipping Learners, Sharing Hope". This mission focuses everything that is done at Trinity First to be filtered through teaching the love of our Savior Jesus Christ. We believe that if at the very core of our teaching students learn the love and forgiveness of our Father then students will have a firm foundation where they can grow to become successful adults who continue to follow Jesus.

The vision of Trinity First School is to impact our community by being known as a high-quality Christ centered educational center, for children, their families, and our community. Our students and their families learn together, support one another, serve together, and share the love of Jesus with one another. These opportunities take place when we have Family Nights, Bible Studies, and Worship Services, as well as the learning that takes place with students during each school day. Therefore, Trinity First strives to support and encourage learners to become productive citizens of our country here on earth, and ultimately fellow citizens of Heaven.

Trinity First has strong values that help to guide and direct the school and how it functions. These values include: prayer, relationships, inclusive education, family involvement, servanthood, integrity, and excellence. It is through these values that we ensure our mission and vision is being properly executed at Trinity First.

Prayer is a way that we actively engage in our faith. Our God welcomes our praises and petitions and allows us to deepen our relationship with Him. At Trinity First we surround each day in prayer. Our Staff meets every Tuesday and Thursday mornings to begin our day with devotion and prayer. Classrooms begin each day with a daily devotion and prayer time before they begin their coursework for the day.

Every person who joins Trinity First whether it be through their child's enrollment, employment, or service is a part of our Trinity First community. The community of Trinity First reflects and shares in the wider community of believers and in the Body of Christ. Every individual is cherished and relationships are built upon the solid understanding that everyone is a child of the King!

At Trinity First we believe that every child is uniquely gifted by our Heavenly Father. This requires us to provide a structured educational setting that nurtures a broad range of learners for whoever God leads to our door. We have special education teachers, and resource teachers who are able to focus on the individual needs of students in all areas of education and personal or social needs. Therefore, no matter where a child is at in their educational journey we have a strong staff who can help encourage them and continue to help them thrive in their academic education.

Family involvement is an integral component for students to have a successful education. We encourage

our parents/guardians to partner with us by having an active role in our school. We do this by offering tuition credit for parents to attend our Family Nights and parenting classes, attend parent teacher conferences, and volunteer at school. All of these opportunities help parents learn the importance of getting involved in the life of their child and supporting them in their academic and Christ - centered future.

At Trinity First we believe that we love because God first loved us and we serve because God first served us. We serve our community through offering special events and programs. We also teach our students the value of serving others through the value of volunteering. Therefore, Trinity First recognizes and deeply values the service of others who share their gifts with us and our school and we do our best to instill that understanding in our students and families that attend our school.

integrity is when someone has honest adherence to moral and ethical principles. As christians we have a strong ethical bind to act in a morally and ethically honest way in all we do. This requires everyone at Trinity First to be honest, respectful, and upstanding citizens of our school, church, and community.

Excellence is when we simply give our very best. Trinity First students and staff are expected to strive to be the very best they can be. Teachers and administrators strive to implement high quality education and meet the needs of each student. Students are taught to always do their very best in everything placed before them. Perfection is not reality and we teach the reality of sin and failure. However, we also teach the importance of grace, forgiveness, and never giving up.

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

- Through Prayer
- Teachers partner with parents to build up the strengths of their students and help students gain insight in the gifts and talents God has given them.
- Teachers host a meet-&-greet with their incoming students and parents each summer before the new school year begins.
- Teachers post grades and comments on Gradelink for each student
- Teachers and Staff are able to communicate with families quickly and safely via Remind
- Daily notes, conferences, phone calls, emails, text messages, and weekly Classroom
- Connections with parents and caregivers are made at drop off and pick up
- Our school ends each day in the chapel for [song and prayer](#). Parents who pick up their children are encouraged to participate. At the end parents and teachers get face to face time every day.
- Parents are encouraged to set up meetings with teachers to build relationships and foster student growth

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

- Students are encouraged to talk to their teachers no matter how big or small an issue might be
- Students know that teachers care for them by building relationships with them.
- Afternoon assistance in homework is available for students.
- Students are greeted individually in the morning.
- Relationships are also cultivated through chapel services, morning devotions, extracurriculars and special events.

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

- Our school follows state and district mandates regarding legal rights.
- Security and privacy are highly valued and practiced.
- All school doors are locked throughout the school day.
- Trinity First has a [Crisis Management Plan](#)
- Our administrator receives notices through the State of Minnesota and Minnesota South District office regarding changes in legal rights.
- As stated on p. 6 of the Trinity First Handbook: **Notice of Nondiscriminatory Policy Regarding Students** Trinity First 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, or ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship, and loan programs and athletics or other school-administered programs.
- Equal Opportunity Employment Act is posted

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

- The Sunday morning congregation and school staff, students, and families worship together at the start of the school year to [rededicate and install](#) the faculty and staff and bless the students and families
- Pastor Jon supports the school through weekly chapel, baptism, communion, and confirmation classes
- A [Children's Christmas Program](#) is held each year and families and congregation members are invited
- Families of the school are invited to join the congregation in regular worship services
- When Parent Bible Studies are held parents from the school and adults from the congregation are all welcome to attend

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

- Teachers maintain regular contact with parents and are available for meetings by request
- Many classrooms have weekly or daily notes available to parents.
- Teachers host a meet-&-greet with their incoming students and parents each summer before the new school year begins.
- A Parent Orientation is held before school begins to assist parents with preparing for the school year, get to know the staff, become acquainted with the school guidelines and policies, and gain a better awareness of the school.
- A School Open House is held for PK-8th grade classes in the fall to get to know families better and for families to become better acquainted with the staff and the building. Families are encouraged to attend.
- The school hosts other special events for families to attend and get to know the staff and other families - Family nights, Bible Studies, Game Nights, Fall Festival, Thanksgiving Banquet, Christmas Program, and our Spring Musical.

- Teachers attend as many school events as they are able.
- 7. How do the ways that school personnel relate to one another contribute to the school's climate?**
- We share prayer requests at [staff devotions](#) to support and uplift each other.
 - Camaraderie is nurtured through [faculty and staff get togethers](#) and parties during the school year.
 - We support and care for one another by celebrating our milestones and expressing our support and love in times of need.
 - Teachers attend one of the two Service Saturdays during the school year
 - Teachers volunteer to watch students so parents can attend family nights or bible studies
 - Teachers often collaborate with others to come up with new and improved lessons or teaching strategies.
- 8. Describe the school's discipline policy and its impact on school climate.**
- The school's discipline policy follows a Positive Behavior Support System where the teachers and administration focus on clear verbal and non-verbal communication, understanding of the full situation, positive behavior, and redirection. [Our student Behavior Guidance guidelines can be found in our parent handbook beginning on page 21](#))
 - Physical punishment is never an option and will not be tolerated. It is harmful, unlawful, and it does not reflect the love and forgiveness we are trying to instill in the students at Trinity First.
 - Positive Behavior Support Techniques help children develop safe and appropriate ways of interacting with others and their environment, positive tools and coping strategies, and more appropriate problem solving skills.
 - Teachers are expected to teach their students clear rules and boundaries so when those rules or boundaries are not followed students are aware of what the consequence will be for their action.
 - Teacher and staff members model the behavior that is expected of students so students can see it and imitate it easily.
 - Teachers encourage students, redirect students, and offer choices to students to help students learn how to make positive choices.
 - We value integrity and excellence in all of our students and staff members. When mistakes are made truth and honesty must be discovered and upheld

Required Evidence

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



School discipline policy and procedures

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:

[Teacher & Staff Handbook](#)

[Parent Handbook](#)

[Crisis Management Plan](#)

[Staff Devotion list](#)

[Classroom Devotion Example](#)

[Family Night / Bible Study List](#)

[Parent Orientation](#)

[Open House Event](#)

[Thanksgiving](#)

[Fall Festival](#)

[Christmas Program](#)

[Parent Teacher Conferences](#)

[Remind App](#)

[Survey Results from 2023-2024](#)

[Covid-19 Reopening Plan](#)

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.

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

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:

- [Staff Devotions](#)
- [Student / Classroom Devotions](#)
- [Daily Closing](#)
- [Chapel](#)
- [Hallway art projects](#)
- [Code of Conduct in the Parent Handbook page 23](#)

Comments:

Students are taught to love others because Christ first loved us. They are also held accountable for their actions and begin to understand over time how their actions impact others around them. Teachers are here because they care about their students emotionally, physically and spiritually. You will see Teachers caring for all of the needs of their students in a variety of ways. Students participate in daily devotions and prayer time

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:

[Resource Teachers](#)

Special Ed through LSEM

[MAP Testing](#)

[Morning devotions](#)

[Faith Integrated Curriculum](#)

[Pastor Jon teaching bible classes](#)

[Pastor Jon teaching chapel](#)

Pastor Jon teaching baptism classes

[Pastor Jon teaching Confirmation classes](#)

[The School's Behavior Guidance](#) (page 21) (Parent & Staff Handbooks)

[Teachers leading closing](#) at the end of the day builds and promotes a positive school spirit

Many classrooms begin with student collaboration to create their own classroom rules

Comments:

At Trinity First our teachers and staff members recognize, value and respect the needs of all the students in the school. This is evident when we ensure that our values which include: prayer, relationships, individualized education, integrity and excellence are implemented to the fullest. When people come to Trinity First they will see and experience the love and care that our staff has for each child who attends school here. This is visibly seen with staff openly praying with children, offering a listening ear, and helping students solve problems of all sizes. While we are a small school we currently have been blessed with great resource teachers, a pastor, and a school counselor. These staff members are able to give students more 1:1 attention where they can help them deal with social / emotional situations, offer guidance, and problem solving skills all through the knowledge and wisdom of Jesus Christ.

When discipline is given it is important that staff members clearly define what rules were broken and how the student can fix the situation, as well as understanding that while the choice might not have been great, they are still loved and forgiven.

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:

[Teachers and staff](#) posted at every door greeting parents and students as they enter the building each day
Ms. Farrand is the face of our school, welcoming everyone who calls, emails, or comes in our doors.

[Staff all use Remind to easily communicate with parents](#)

[Parent Teacher Conferences](#)

[Family Nights](#)

[Parents Volunteering at the School](#)

[Kinder Family Play Nights](#)

All [student information](#) is properly gathered and kept under lock and key

Comments:

At Trinity First we believe that education is a collaborative process that takes parental involvement for their students to succeed. Now that COVID regulations have subsided and regular school operations can resume, parents have been able to come into the school freely again. This has helped strengthen the relationships our teachers and staff have built with our families and has increased parents willingness to volunteer and support the school.

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 devotion schedule](#)

[staff care](#) page (reminds each of us how to care for our co-workers)

Comments:

Trinity First has a very welcoming environment for all who enter and are willing to work hard and be apart of the ministry that takes place here.

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)

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

Based on the evidence that we have provided, the strengths that we display for standard 2C include a strong Christ-centered climate that stems from our schools mission, vision, and values. No matter if you are a first time visitor to Trinity First or you have been a part of its community for decades it is evident that we are a Christ-centered community that seeks to build lasting relationships with all the families who attend and become part of our school community. But truly that starts not with our families but with our own staff members. Before each school year our staff takes part in a two - three day retreat where the majority of the focus is placed on building rapport and relationships with one another. The more comfortable our staff is with one another the more comfortable we are working together to come alongside our school families and support them in any way possible. This includes getting to know each student and discovering what specific needs they may have. To help this process we seek to work directly with parents to come up with the best plan of action to help their child succeed to the best of their ability.

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 staff at Trinity First does an excellent job of displaying and modeling Christ's love to everyone that walks in the doors of the school no matter who they are or where they come from. But, one thing that can make that difficult is dealing with language barriers. One of the challenges of being at Trinity First is learning how to deal with a vast amount of cultures and languages that we have here. Sometimes it can be challenging to work with a family when you struggle communicating with them, or you do not understand the background they are coming in with. Using our new internal communication app Remind has been able to help us a lot with communicating with families in different languages, but teaching families how to use it is another challenge. Learning the cultures that they come from also takes time and patience. It is very unique to be in a place where we have so many different cultures and languages present but it takes time to ensure we are being sensitive, respectful, and understanding of all of those differences.

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	3
2B	3
2C	3
Total:	9
Average: (Total ÷ 10)	3

STANDARD 3: LEADERSHIP

The school is governed and administered effectively following written policy.

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

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

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

STANDARD 3A: GOVERNANCE

Overview

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

Potential Evidence

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

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

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

Potential Practices

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

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

Required Responses

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

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

The congregation is the head governing body of our ministry through its voting members who meet each year in December, and as needed.

Our school operates under an advisory school board. We assessed the needs in our succession planning and determined a more traditional board would better fit the needs. Responsibilities for the School Board are to: facilitate and support crisis management, mission accountability, fiduciary process oversight, supporting and evaluating the principal, ensuring effective long-term organizational planning, ensuring adherence to ethical and legal standards and norms, and mission advocacy.

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

The School Board members are selected by the administrative team and are chosen from people who are actively involved in the school ministry. These members are also ratified by our congregation.

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

The board conducts an annual review of the principal, and the board chair reviews responses from the board.

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

The policies and minutes are on file and are available upon request.

[School Board Manual](#)

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

The [annual report](#) is sent to all supporting donors and congregational members. Also, the annual church and school congregational meeting informs the congregation's voting members about the current direction of the school. Board members attend the meeting and are available to speak about policy decisions.

The Board and the Trinity First Charitable Trust Foundation met this Fall to look at the overall financial health of our organization, better understand the roles of both boards, and make sure that both boards are working together toward a common goal.

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

The School Board and Administration Team work well together to assess the needs of TFLS and determine any directional changes or adjustments that may need to be made. Our School Board and Administrative Team have worked tirelessly over the last years (as have all schools) to carry our school community through the Covid-19 shut downs, the George Floyd riots and more. We have responded with a swiftness that has surprised even us! We have created policies and guidelines for responding to the pandemic and for staff and

student safety.

Together we have also expanded our staffing to address the significant learning needs of our students who were greatly impacted by the pandemic.

However, it was calling a Campus Pastor that allowed us to significantly deepen our impact into our school and neighborhood communities! In January of 2021, Pastor Jon Kuehne joined our staff and began building relationships within our school and our neighborhood. Our school has been blessed immensely through his ministry!

Here are just some of the actions that we have taken:

- [long-range planning and analysis for school growth and facility improvement](#)
- [COVID-19 policies](#) handbook
- [COVID-19](#) plans to keep staff safe
- [COVID-19](#) response plan
- Implemented MAP Testing
- [Managing ARP/EANS II](#)
- Created a [Volunteer Handbook](#)
- [NLSA Action Plan](#)
- [Love Our City](#) -a response in the wake of the riots of 2020
- [Love Our City](#) Phase two
- School Security: hiring [Minneapolis Police](#) to provide a secure presence as staff and students arrive and depart from school until we could install signs, lighting and cameras as deterrents.
- Increasing Instructional Staff - using EANS funding we added 6 staff members to address learning loss
- [Building Expansion plan](#)

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

Our administrative team meets weekly to discuss the needs of the school that are being presented at this time. Our facility board meets regularly to discuss the facility needs of our school and how they can help improve or maintain the grounds.

While the administration team regularly engage in vision casting and acting in proaction for the future, we are also a reactive ministry, constantly reevaluating the needs around us and what God is doing at this present time. Many organizations have come through in an attempt to do ministry but failed to keep the school as the priority.

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

Our school works with a CPA who provides oversight for our bookkeeper and helps us prepare our financial reports and annual budgets for our School Board, our congregation at our annual meeting, and for our Charitable Trust and Foundation board. Our School Board approves our budgets and brings their wisdom and oversight to its formation. We also publish an [annual report](#) that is sent out to all our donors. We are currently in the process of looking for a new development director. Our previous Development Direct also served in an oversight capacity.

Required Evidence

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

Board or governing authority handbook or policy manual including policies relating to roles of board, administrator and pastor

Board Training Schedule/Agenda

Required Indicators of Success

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

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

YES

NO

Identify and list supporting Evidence or Practices:

[School Board Training](#)

[School Board Policy Manual](#) (see page 1 and page 5)

Comments:

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

YES

NO

Identify and list supporting Evidence or Practices:

[Trinity First Flow Chart](#)

[TFL Constitution and ByLaws](#)

[Church-School Meeting](#)

[Parent Survey](#)

[Teacher Survey](#)

[Student Survey](#)

[Parent Handbook](#)

[Teacher Handbook](#)

[Volunteer Handbook](#)

[School Board Manual](#) (see pages 4-5)

Comments:

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

YES

NO

Identify and list supporting Evidence or Practices:

[Trinity First Flow Chart](#)

[Pastor Job Description](#)

[Admin Job Description](#)

[School Board 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.

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:

- [School Board Policy Manual](#)
- [Annual Meeting Agenda](#)
- [CTF School Board Meeting notes](#)
- [School Board Meeting Minutes](#)

[School Board Google Meet](#)

[TFL Teacher Handbook](#)

[TFL Parent Handbook](#)

[TFLS Vision Casting](#)

[Building Expansion Plan](#)

Comments:

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:

[School Board Meeting Notes](#)

[School Board Agenda](#)

[Admin Job Duties](#)

[School Board Manual](#) (pages 8-9)

Administration Evaluation Tool

[Teacher Reviews](#)

[Performance Review template](#)

Comments: Our Board Chair does not use a formal document for evaluations. “When we went through our first certification, we tried to get a structured review format. We got one and I tried it. But I also got a lot of frustrated comments from some of the other board members. I made the decision to poll all of them and ask for areas of concern. It worked much better. I also hope that we can keep this more flexible approach.” Dan Riser Board Chair

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:

[School Board Manual](#) (see page 4-5)
[Board Training Slides](#)

Comments:

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:

The Principal/administrator and other members of the Admin team attend School Board meetings providing a report of current events, enrollment, and updates on action items suggested or given fallback from each meeting.

The Trinity First staff has weekly meetings, [start](#) and [close](#) of the year meetings, and they review curriculum on an annual rotating basis.

A school survey is used as an assessment tool to understand the long-range desire of parents. This assessment tool has been implemented and is submitted for participation on an annual basis.

The accreditation process is also used as an evaluation tool to better understand the future needs of the school on both an annual and 5 year rotation. [NLSA Action Plan](#)

Professional development goals

[Outreach Plan](#)

[Teacher Mentorship Program](#)

[Vision Casting TFLS](#)

[Building Expansion Plan](#)

Comments:

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

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

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

- The board or governing authority establishes policies that provide for sound budget planning and fiscal operations.

- The board or governing authority approves the budget (including annual tuition and fees) for the school or has developed policies to empower individuals with that responsibility.

- The board or governing authority accepts, reviews and devises strategies to react to concerns expressed in an annual external financial review or financial audit.

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

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

Identify and list supporting Evidence or Practices:

- [CTF School Board Meeting](#)
- [School Board Manual](#)
- [School Board Meeting Minutes](#)
- [Financial Policy](#)
- [TFLS P&L](#)

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 3A? (YES / NO)

Yes

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

The Administrator has been a strong and consistent component of the school’s daily function for 30+ years. The job description, roles and responsibilities as well as limitations are well documented for succession planning purposes.

The Administrator consistently upholds the school’s mission and purpose and guides staff in a positive, effective manner.

The school is blessed with strong and invested leadership from the administration team that works well together.

The School Board is made up of dedicated people from outside the school community who volunteer and care for the school, its staff and the students. They are hands-on in their approach and have served side by side with all of us who work here. They also know our students and shower them with affection and support! Our board also works to share our ministry within their own congregations and communities. This extends our support immeasurably.

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

The school does not currently have a Development Director (as of Jan 2024). This puts the burden of fundraising back on the administrative team. We are currently looking to fill that position.

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

STANDARD 3B: ADMINISTRATION

Overview

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

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

Potential Evidence

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

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

Potential Practices

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

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

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

Required Responses

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

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

The many activities are scheduled and communicated through Gradelink and Remind

- Monthly athletic, musical practice calendars (paper) are seasonal, Trinity First also updated their running yearly calendar with email alerts.
- Important announcements for special events such as Fall Festival and [Christmas Program](#) and [re-enrollment](#) are made available in English, [Spanish](#), and [Amharic](#)
- Office Calendar (paper)
- These above calendars are primarily populated in June for the upcoming school year, then updated as needed. Whenever an update is made, the author of the change determines the best way to communicate the change with the appropriate audience, usually via Gradelink and Remind
- The [school calendar](#) is shared with parents in many ways: on the school website and printed/distributed at the beginning of the school year. School calendar events are also sent to the parents in a weekly email. Parents can pick up a copy of the calendar in the office.
- The athletic calendar and spring musical calendar are shared with parents via Remind only, and parents are reminded and encouraged to check it online often for updates.
- In August, [schedules](#) are developed for each classroom, for the specialty areas (gym, music, choir, Boys' & Girls' clubs, friendship group, etc), [chapel](#), school choir field trips, and more.
- Tuesday Mornings are set aside for school staff meetings where we review upcoming plans and events and make plans. We also recap past events in these staff meetings for future improvement.
- Daily administration activities include:
 - The Principal arrives at 7:00am for office time and staff meeting at 7:30am. Principal assists with running the main office, talking with parents and students when they enter.
 - The Principal attends faculty devotions at 7:30am daily, which also includes an opportunity for daily reminders
 - The administrators are available all-day, every day (except when in the classroom and out in the community) to meet with parents, answer phone calls and emails, interact with students in the hallways, address discipline issues, and work with support staff. The administrators are generally available after school hours for staff, student, or parent needs.

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

1. Possess a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.
2. Be a member of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.
3. Be eligible for a Divine Call or willing to go through colloquy.
4. Have an experienced understanding of Lutheran elementary education.
5. Have a passion for the vision and mission of Trinity First Lutheran School.

6. Be able to think strategically, and to develop short, mid, and long-term objectives.
7. Possess communication skills of the highest level in order to inspire and motivate a wide variety of groups of people.
8. Work as part of a team, leading, owning and sharing activities and goals.
9. Lead by example.
10. Desire to work within Lutheran Christian setting and display the associated life values.

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

In the congregation:

- The PRINCIPAL has the ultimate responsibility and authority for Trinity First Lutheran School, under the direction of the School Board.
- The PRINCIPAL shall provide leadership for the School Board by furnishing professional advice and information on such matters as school law, school finance, business management, public relations, student recruitment, financial resource development and long-range planning, and other matters as requested by the Board.
- The PRINCIPAL shall be charged with the responsibility of implementing the policies of the Board in the areas of the PRINCIPAL's responsibilities.
- The PRINCIPAL shall have the responsibility of representing the school to the supporting congregations and to the community at large and to provide each with an accurate and persistent orientation toward the goals and objectives of the school.
- The PRINCIPAL has served on various building committees
- The PRINCIPAL organized and lead yearly staff retreats
- The PRINCIPAL is serving on Capital Campaign Committee
- The Administrative Assistant is also acting as church secretary
- The Community Outreach & Family Advocacy Director serves on the Summer Bridge to Success planning committee and leads opening, closing, and music during SBS.
- The Administration Team serves on the planning committee for all major outreach events such as the the Fall Festival, Christmas program, Community Family Fair and Summer Bridge to Success.
- The Ministry Support Coordinator often posts school announcements in the church bulletins, school website and our school Facebook page.
- The Administration Team posts on the school social media accounts weekly or monthly.
- The Administration Team members are present at donor church events.

In the Community:

- The PRINCIPAL organized a large scale food drive in the wake of the riots of 2020 to meet the needs of the community when our local grocery store shut down to prevent looting.
- The Administration team visits and promoties school at area churches and street fairs.
- Marie Sandvik Center, Community Emergency Services, North Central University, Concordia University, Concordia Academy, and local Christian congregations all coordinate efforts with Trinity First Lutheran School.

In professional organization:

The PRINCIPAL is a member of [LEA](#) and [Mindependent](#)

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

The PRINCIPAL will be responsible for the fiscal management of the school.

The PRINCIPAL will be responsible for the preparation and management of the annual budget.

The PRINCIPAL will coordinate all capital initiatives of the school.

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

Trinity First Lutheran Church is a small but tenacious group of members that have a long-standing relationship supporting the school and church building. Trinity First Lutheran School is the mission of this church. The school has begun to take over the fiscal responsibility and care of the facility. The school is committed to supporting the church in any way necessary. The principal is a member of the congregation and is tasked with working with the congregation to address the ever changing dynamics of the school and how the school ministry is working to advance the mission of the church: Meeting Needs, Sharing Christ.

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

The PRINCIPAL involves prayer in all staff meetings. She is constantly reminding staff and supporting congregations about our mission to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with our students and their families. She recognizes that we rely on God's grace and consistently verbalizes that truth.

The PRINCIPAL ministers and provides ministry to students, staff, parents, and all that participate in the ministry of Trinity First School.

The PRINCIPAL encourages the spirit of ministry among all who serve at Trinity First School.

The PRINCIPAL maintains close contact with supporting congregations.

The PRINCIPAL participates as a member of a Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod congregation, regularly attending worship and Holy Communion.

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

- The PRINCIPAL has met with administrators of other area Lutheran schools to support each other in similar struggles, showing that she is willing to learn with other administrators. She participates in the Region One principal meetings. She has also spent five years visiting and studying urban LCMS schools across the country through a grant written by the synodical LCMS Educational Ministry staff - working with Dr. Carl Moser and Dr. William Cochran.

- When a local hispanic church asked to rent our church for their weekly services, the PRINCIPAL quickly realized it could be a partnership allowing more ministry opportunity for both parties. This directly allowed us to minister to more Hispanic families and resulted in some Hispanic families joining our school. While the Hispanic church has moved into a new facility, we still maintain relationships with the students who stayed at our school.
- The PRINCIPAL created the Administrative Team to share responsibilities and duties and as part of succession planning. The entire model is based on collaboration, working on each individual's strengths.

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

The PRINCIPAL attends district conferences such as LEA Administrators Conference and Best Practices in Feb of 2019 and also makes professional development hours available for teachers.

The PRINCIPAL is a member of [Mindependent](#) and [LEA](#)

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

The PRINCIPAL visits different classrooms regularly to see what is going on. She is involved in leading different discussions that affect the entire classroom and participates when asked by the classroom teacher. She has a good handle on what kind of teaching is taking place. Trinity First Lutheran School does have a [teacher evaluation form](#) that has been utilized. Most of our evaluations are informal in the sense that we establish goals in August and meet with her in June to discuss these goals.

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

With students and families:

- a. The Principal and Amind team greet students (and waves to parents) daily at drop-off and pick-up.
- b. The Principal and Admin Team are present at nearly every school event, greeting and having conversations with parents and students.
- c. The Principal is consistently available in her office during the day or by appointment.
- d. The Principal joins the school for weekly chapels and daily closings.

With staff:

- e. The Principal greets the staff every morning as they participate in daily devotions.
- f. The Principal leads weekly faculty meetings.
- g. The Principal is available to assist teachers with discipline as needed. If the Principal is not available, the Secretary is also available to assist.
- h. The Principal and Admin Team plan and engage staff social events.
- i. The Principal is available before and after school for discussions and guidance.

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

All teachers are encouraged to attend at the school's expense. These conferences include: MN South District Educators Conference, MN South District In-Services and Region 1 conference. The teachers have attended LEA depending on location. In 2020 Sarah Wippich and Chrissy Tredray attended the LEA Administrators Conference in Arizona. If funds are available, teachers have participated in national conferences such as Best Practices.

Required Evidence

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

Administrator's job description

Required Indicator of Success

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

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

YES

NO

Identify and list supporting Evidence or Practices:

[Administrator's Job Description](#)

[Principal duties and responsibilities](#)

Comments:

We are blessed to have a principal that has been at Trinity First for 32 years.

General Indicators of Success

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Identify and list supporting Evidence or Practices:

[Master’s of Arts Degree](#) in Education with a focus on Differentiated Learning
Member of [LEA](#) and [Minndependent](#)

Comments:

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:

Total school enrollment is currently 143 students as of 12/8/23

The PRINCIPAL has no current classroom teaching responsibilities.

- [School Board Manual \(pg 8-9\)](#)

The Administrative Team was assembled by the PRINCIPAL to help support her and the administrative functions of the school.

- [Admin Team Job Description](#)

Comments:

Our principal has full time administration responsibility allowing for her focus to be in the whole school rather than splitting her time between a classroom and the office. The Admin team was created to support the principal by providing a wider range of opinions, wisdom, experiences and reach. The Admin team also serves to protect the school by providing succession planning and support.

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

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

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

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

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

Identify and list supporting Evidence or Practices:

- [Remind Messages](#)
- [Parent Handbook](#)
- [Title Funds](#)
- [Reaching UP Reaching OUT](#)
- [Annual Report](#)

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:

[School Board Manual](#)

[Administration Job Description](#)

[Financial Policies](#)

Comments:

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

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

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

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

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

Identify and list supporting Evidence or Practices:

- The PRINCIPAL involves prayer in all staff meetings. She is constantly reminding staff and supporting congregations about our mission to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with our students and their families. She recognizes that we rely on God’s grace and consistently verbalizes that truth.
- The PRINCIPAL ministers and provides ministry to students, staff, parents, and all that participate in the ministry of Trinity First School.
- The PRINCIPAL encourages the spirit of ministry among all who serve at Trinity First School.
- The PRINCIPAL maintains close contact with supporting congregations.
- The PRINCIPAL participates as a member of a Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod congregation, regularly attending worship and Holy Communion.
- The PRINCIPAL is a member of [LEA](#) and [Mindependent](#).
- [Professional Development plan](#)
- [Teacher Mentorship program](#)

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)

Yes

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

The Administrator has been a strong and consistent component of the school's daily function for 30+ years. The job description, roles and responsibilities as well as limitations are well documented for succession planning purposes.

The Administrator consistently upholds the school's mission and purpose and guides staff in a positive, effective manner.

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.

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	3
3B:03	3
3B:04	3
3B:05	3
3B:06	3
Total:	15
Average: (Total ÷ 5)	3

- 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	15
Total:	30
Average: (Total ÷ 10)	3

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.

Educational requirements are described in the [Teacher & Staff Handbook](#). Each teacher is required to hold a

- A bachelor's degree. In Early Childhood Education, Elementary Education or in the teaching area assigned is greatly preferred, and/or...
- Certified by the state or taking steps toward such certification in the area of responsibility.

Many of our administrative staff also hold teaching licenses. All [teaching licenses](#) are kept in personnel files.

All teachers are required to profess the Christian faith. We make an effort to employ teachers who have been synodically trained, but also hire teachers who are committed to teaching LCMS doctrine. Those who are not synodically trained sign a [Faith & Life covenant](#).

2. What is the current student-teacher ratio?

The current student-teacher ratio is 12.9:1. This number was calculated with 142 students and 11 staff members working full-time in classrooms

- K3 Teacher
- K4 Teacher
- K5 Teacher
- 1st grade Teacher
- 2nd grade Teacher
- 3rd/4th grade Teacher
- 5th grade Teacher
- 6th grade Teacher
- 7th/8th grade Teacher
- 6th grade Resource Teacher
- 7th/8th grade Resource Teacher

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

Our staff development process is outlined in our [Professional Development Plan](#). Each aspect of professional development aligns with at least one school goal, student improvement goal, and staff goal.

- All staff are required to attend staff orientation in August, according to the [August schedule](#)
- Periodic workshops throughout the year with staff or outside speakers
 - Curriculum Trak
 - Meetings with [Professional Learning Communities](#) (PLC) regarding accreditation

- Training on new curricula
- [CPR/First Aid training](#)
- [Training on new technology equipment or software used in the classrooms](#)
- Opportunities to participate in outside conferences, such as
 - [Early Educator Conference](#) hosted by Concordia University, St. Paul
 - Minnesota South District conference
 - [Individual workshops/classes as chosen by the individual, either online or in person](#)

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

Staff meetings take place before the school year begins, throughout the school year, and after the school year ends.

- [Staff Orientation](#): Staff gather together 3 weeks before school starts and participate in meetings that discuss the following
 - Familiarity with policies and procedures by going over the [Staff & Faculty Handbook](#) and [Parent Handbook](#)
 - Building training (location of various places and how parts of building are used)
 - Kitchen training
 - Gradelink training (online student administrative portal)
 - Curriculum Trak training (curriculum mapping software)
 - Curriculum training (overview of new curriculum for the year)
 - [Parent Orientation overview](#) - teacher roles and goals for parents
 - Accreditation overview
 - Review scheduled events and responsibilities
- During the school year, staff follow a [weekly meeting schedule](#)
- [End-of-Year Wrap-up](#): Staff gather for 1 week between the end of the school year and our Summerbridge to Success program. Staff meet for the following
 - How to record and file student data
 - Planning the schedule for the following school year
 - Contact plans with families for the summer
 - [Textbook ordering](#) for the following school year
 - [Individual review meeting with principal](#)
 - Preparing classroom for the summer - [fix-it lists](#), cleaning lists, use during summer school program

Staff Orientation is effective because it provides a comprehensive overview of how the school year will function. This is helpful for the new staff who are acclimating to our school and for the veteran staff who are reminded of procedures as they get back into the swing of the school year. Morning devotions are effective because it is a chance for everyone to be on the same page regarding special events happening during the week and special circumstances that may be occurring. It is also a chance for staff to pray for each other and for the students and families. Finally, the end-of-year meetings are effective because they give teachers a chance to close out their year, reflect on how it went, and look ahead to the next year.

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

Teachers demonstrate their personal relationship with Jesus Christ and faith in a variety of ways:

- Attending [Annual Staff Retreat](#)
- Leading [morning devotions and prayer](#)
- Leading [chapel once per year with their students](#)
- [Teaching Religion/Bible class](#) to their students
- Integrating faith into other areas of the curriculum ([Example 1](#), [Example 2](#))
- Attending their home church regularly
- Participating in [school service projects](#)
- Participating in [National Lutheran Schools Week](#)
- Attending [Choir events](#)
- Interactions with parents and students that emulates Christ's love
- Schoolwide application of Law and Gospel in all situations
- [Leading Closing Music & Prayer](#) at the end of the day

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

When there is a teacher need, generally, this process is followed

- The principal seeks out potential candidates from the following sources:
 - Minnesota South District
 - Synodical universities
 - Networking with staff, supporters, or other individuals connected to the school
- A [resume](#) or [CMIF \(Commissioned Minister Information Form\)](#) is reviewed by the principal and administrative team
- A prospective candidate is [emailed](#) to gauge interest
- If the individual is interested, the principal or an administrative team member conducts an informal phone interview with the prospective candidate
- If interest continues, a [formal interview](#), either in person or through video chat, is conducted
- If the candidate is hired, a background check is run through Protect My Ministry
- New staff are installed through an [Installation & Rededication service](#) at the beginning of each school year

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

- Each teacher has a [laptop](#) computer.
- We have enough [chromebooks](#) for every student in the school in Kindergarten through 8th grade. Each student has a username and password to login to the chromebook to access online software and curricula.
- Each classroom is equipped with a [Promethean board](#) and [document camera](#) and used daily by teachers and students
- [WiFi](#) is available throughout the building
- Professional development sessions during Staff Orientation and throughout the year with a focus on technology usage in the classroom

- Teachers use Gmail, [Gradelink](#) (online administrative portal), and [Remind](#) (school communication system) to communicate with parents, maintain grades, post newsletters, and take attendance
- Online components for the following subjects: [English](#), [Reading for K5-2nd](#), [Reading for 3rd-8th](#), [Social Studies](#), [Science](#), [Math](#),
- Each year there are several [Online Learning Days](#) where teachers prepare online activities for their students to complete at home using a computer or tablet
- Teachers use PowerPoints for instruction
- Teachers access [Teachers Pay Teachers](#) for other resources
- Teachers utilize the following educational programs with their students
 - Shurley English app on Promethean board (3rd/4th)
 - [ALEKS](#) (Math),
 - [McGrawHill](#) (Math)
 - [TCI](#) (History + Science)
 - [Google Classroom](#)
 - Right Now Media
 - MobyMax
 - Epic books
 - UFLI online teaching slides and blending board
 - LexiaCore5
 - ActivInspire
 - Google Slides
 - Simpli Piano
 - Emotional ABC's
 - Career One Stop
 - Education Planner (career education tools)

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

- Our [statement of beliefs](#) is listed on our website
- Conversations about faith during the [interview process](#) with the principal and pastor regarding topics such as:
 - Baptism
 - Communion
 - Inerrancy of scripture
 - 7-day (24 hours) creation
 - Triune God
 - Homosexuality
- [Devotions](#) 2 times per week, with one of those times led by our campus pastor
- [Weekly chapel service](#) led by our campus pastor
- Encouragement to attend services at Trinity First Lutheran Church when our campus pastor leads the service
- Agreement to a [Faith & Life covenant](#)

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](#)
- [MinistrySafe Training](#) for all school employees, coaches, sponsors (encouraged to have all volunteers also trained)

Required Indicator of Success

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

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

YES

NO

Identify and list supporting Evidence or Practices:

- Prospective staff review the [statement of beliefs](#) on the website
- [Faith & Life Covenant](#)
- [Teacher Survey results](#)
- [Teacher Job Description](#)
- [Teacher Aide Job Description](#)

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.

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

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

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

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

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

Identify and list supporting Evidence or Practices:

- Teachers review the [statement of beliefs](#) listed on our website
- Current [teaching certificates](#) are kept in personnel files
- [Background checks](#) are also kept in personnel files
- [Teacher Interview](#)

Comments:

Non-LCMS teachers are not in a colloquy program
All of our teachers are certified in their area of teaching.

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:

- [Professional development plan](#)
- [Teacher evaluation by principal](#)
- Spiritual development is provided through a [weekly Bible study](#) with Pastor Jon
- [Professional Development certificates](#)
- Informal check ins at [morning devotions](#)
- Teachers use [technology](#) in their classrooms and in Specials classrooms (like Music)
- [LEA](#)

Comments:

Some teachers hold memberships in professional organizations such as LEA.

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:

- [August orientation schedule](#)
- Teachers are involved in [professional development](#)
- [Sick days and personal days](#) are tracked for each employee
- [School Roster](#) & [Staff List](#)
- [School Calendar](#)
- Salary scale based on [Synod Compensation Tool](#)
- [Mentoring Checklist](#)

Comments:

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:

- [Hourly Staff Handbook](#)
- [Sick days and personal days](#) are tracked for each employee
- [Background checks](#) of all staff are kept in employee files
- [Support staff](#) attend several of the trainings in August
- Volunteers go through a [volunteer orientation](#) before volunteering
- Volunteers read and sign an [agreement](#) saying they have read the Volunteer Handbook
- [Remind message from teacher to parents](#)

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 4? (YES / NO)

Yes

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

We have highly qualified staff who have a heart for the ministry in which they serve. We have several training programs in place for our staff and volunteers. These are revised each year to meet the needs of the staff and the changing policies of the school. Teachers are engaged in professional development to further grow and learn in their subject areas.

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.

One challenge is that not all of our teachers are rostered LCMS workers. While each of them subscribes to LCMS teachings and supports that in the classroom, they have not gone through the colloquy process. **teacher degree

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	3
4:04	3
4:05	3
Total:	11
Average: (Total ÷ 4)	2.75

STANDARD 5: TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

Overview

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

Potential Evidence

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

- Descriptions and schedules of mentoring, coaching, and induction programs
- Examples of classroom learning expectations and standards of performance
- Examples of assessments that promoted modification of instruction
- Examples of cross-curricular projects and interdisciplinary instruction
- Peer coaching guidelines and procedures
- Supervision and evaluation procedures
- Curriculum maps
- Curriculum scope and sequence
- Administrative classroom observation protocols and logs
- Examples of improvements to instructional practices resulting from the evaluation process
- Teacher evaluation criteria
- Student work demonstrating the application of knowledge
- Interdisciplinary projects
- Authentic assessments
- Agenda items addressing strategies
- Report cards
- Curriculum writing process
- Lesson plans aligned to curriculum
- Graduate follow-up surveys
- Ethical-use policy for use of technology, equipment, and software
- Inventory list of instructional hardware and equipment used by both teachers and students

- List of classroom and library reference materials
- The school’s short-range and long-range technology plans, including the review schedule and procedures for review of the plans

Potential Practices

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

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

Required Responses

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

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

- [Minnesota State standards](#)
- [One in Christ/Enduring Faith curriculum](#) (published by CPH),
- Luther’s Small Catechism for Religion and Memory.
- Teacher and Principal investigation and input.
- Test Scores
 - a. MAP testing
 - b. Acadience (formerly DIBELS) K5-6
 - i. (PELI)K3 and K4 in research phase
 - ii. (CARI)7/8th grade also in research phase
 - c. WRAT4 - wide range test for new students

- [Curriculum Trak](#)

Yearly discussion of our curriculum in relation to benchmarks, test scores, and teacher input, as well as availability of funds and availability of curriculum are determining factors to changes made.

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

- In addition to daily Bible classes (One in Christ curriculum listed above) and weekly chapels, teachers lead devotions with their class and discuss the Lutheran faith in everyday moments. The Lutheran faith is integrated in a “hidden curriculum” as teachers implement law and gospel-based approaches to students in “real-life” situations such as behavior feedback and redirection, and peer interactions on the playground. Throughout the day, teachers also personally model asking for forgiveness, and other gospel-centered behavior. In addition, teachers build the Lutheran faith and worldview into other areas of the curriculum when discussions take place in classes such as science, social studies, and other subjects. Furthermore, teachers use Luther’s Small Catechism for memory work which instills biblical doctrine in their classroom and minds.

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

- TCI- Science (2021-22): TCI Science was implemented 3 years ago. This curriculum integrates technology, multiple learning intelligences, and project opportunities. It also incorporates language differentiation with helpful tools such as Spanish student packets. Furthermore, resources such as audio for reading, annotation, notes, and individualized instructions guides help students succeed in Science. This is used in grades k-8
- McGraw Hill Math (2022-23): McGraw Hill also aligns better with our MAP testing standards. The desired effect is that this would lead to better comprehension and MAP scores. ALEKS, a service within McGraw Hill Math, also serves students by giving them questions, analyzing their answers, identifying weak spots in their understanding, and then building up those areas. This is used in grades k-8
- Teachers regularly make changes to the materials used in the written curriculum to better meet standards. For example, novel units, trade books, guided reading, and literature circles are constantly changing to fit classroom needs.
- McGraw Hill Reading (2022-23): StudySync curriculum teaches students a variety of reading strategies, which are implemented in readings across many genres. StudySync also provides helpful scaffolding for students such as: audio for reading, text follow, differentiated lexile levels, paragraph numbering, annotation, notes, and individual user profiles which sync up to necessary scaffolding. This resource has greatly served our teachers, by making scaffolding accessible and easy to apply. It has also served our students to always have the resources they need in order to succeed in reading. This is used in grades 7-8 only.

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

- Teachers use direct instruction, cooperative learning, hands-on activities, project-based learning, small group instruction, and centers on a daily basis. Teachers individually evaluate which activities best serve their students for particular learning times.

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

- Teachers communicate through staff meetings, [Remind](#), [WhatsApp](#), and our Google email systems, as well as informal discussions. Collaborative methods include staff mentorship, accreditation work sessions, IEP meetings, professional development sessions, and informal discussions. Teachers collaborate on lesson planning and curriculum development through Curriculum Trak. [There is also a culture of learning from other teachers and Trinity First](#). For example, one staff member audited several classrooms/teachers in order to learn from other teachers' schedules, workflow, classroom management, and unique teaching styles. Teachers also collaborate with each other in order to understand what works best with individual students in the classroom. Furthermore, each year, teachers participate in home visits which require collaboration amongst teachers and communication with parents in order to best serve individual students and their families.

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

- Trinity First accommodates students with unique differences and learning potential in a variety of ways. We have 5 teachers through Lutheran Special Education Ministries, which enables us to have a special education program with multiple full time teachers. This allows us to implement Individualized Education Plans and Service Plans for students with unique learning potential and unique learning needs. Students with learning needs who qualify receive services from Title I teachers for instruction and progress monitoring. Classroom teachers also make other accommodations when warranted.
- Some other accommodations include:
 - Scaffolding built into the reading and math curriculum such as McGraw-Hill and TCI.
 - Algebra math group in 8th grade for advanced math students
 - Individualized reading plan for an individual student with great reading potential
 - Differentiation of Instruction in classrooms
 - Modified assignments
 - Individualized learning through online programs
 - Tutoring one-on-one or in small groups
 - Interest area extra-curricular activities (Lego League, Book Club, Cross Country, Basketball, Musicals, Praise Team)
 - Access to school library
 - [Middle school classrooms visit public library weekly](#)
 - Chromebook access
 - Individualized learning through online accounts such as Aleks (math) and Lexia
 - Classroom libraries and resources

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

Teachers and the office use our online portal, Gradelink, to provide up-to-date grades to which parents have constant access. They can also view missing work and report cards on Gradelink. Parent Teacher conferences are required twice per year. Standardized test results (MAP testing) are shared annually. Teachers call additional meetings, make phone calls, or

send emails or texts as necessary to discuss student performance and behavior. Teachers also participate in IEP meetings. Other methods some teachers use include:

- Rubrics that provide guidelines and feedback for assignment and project completion
- Parent signatures on tests
- In special situations- a daily communication log between home and school
- Daily assignment books which indicates a student's incomplete work, which goes home in order to be received and signed by parents
- Homework folders which organize students' "finished" and "unfinished" work

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

Teachers use a variety of instructional materials throughout the day. This is not an all-inclusive list, but it gives an idea of the extent to which teachers go outside of textbook teaching.

- Promethean Boards in each classroom
- Classroom chromebooks
- Projectors, document cameras, PowerPoint presentations
- Lexia Learning- to enrich student learning and track progress
- RightNow Media, Spelling City, Discovery Education
- Math manipulatives
- Novels, big books, and picture books
- Charts, posters, diagrams
- Personal white boards/response boards
- Science labs and models
- Ukuleles, drums, recorders and other various instruments
- Physical education equipment
- Art materials and supplies
- Various center materials in early childhood classrooms

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

Teachers provide students with the materials necessary to enhance their learning by setting up their classroom with access to many of the items listed below as well as making room in their schedules for accessing resources not in the classroom.

- Access to school library
- Middle school classrooms visit public library weekly
- Chromebook/ipad access for research and education
- Individualized learning through online accounts such as Lexia, McGraw Hill and ALEKS
- Classroom libraries and resources
- Lexia Learning- to enrich student learning and track progress

- RightNow Media, Spelling City, Discovery Education
- Math manipulatives
- Novels, big books, and picture books
- Charts, posters, diagrams
- Personal white boards/response boards
- Science labs and models
- Physical education equipment
- Art materials and supplies
- Various center materials in early childhood classrooms

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

- Bibles are available for every student. Kindergarteners are given a pictorial Bible every year and our 7th and 8th graders are given a Catechism to keep and a Bible at graduation. We also provide free Bibles to all our families as requested.
- Our handwriting program, [A Reason For](#), is a scripture based curriculum that helps us reinforce our introduction and instruction of Holy Scripture.
- Art projects in which the students can express their faith
- Teachable moments throughout the day
- Each classroom prepares a chapel service and presents it to the school, inviting parents and special guests.
- [Bulletin Boards](#) are used to communicate faith and give students a chance to display their own faith.
- Online recordings through RightNow Media and Answers in Genesis are used regularly.
- Listening to, singing, and performing Christian music in chapel, during music classes, and at closing service.
- Memory work projects in which the students create a visual display that shows the meaning of a verse they have memorized demonstrate understanding.
- Puppets and props are used in early childhood classes.

11. Describe how students who struggle academically are supported.

- Treehouse support through [LSEM](#) (5 full-time LSEM staff members)
- Reading and Math Title 1 programming - students can qualify to get extra small group
- Reading Specialist- based on teacher input and testing.
- In-class reading groups
- Differentiated Instruction from full time in-class Resource Teacher
- Speech specialist

Required Evidence

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

- Curriculum documentation is developed and implemented for every grade level for religion, mathematics, science, reading, language arts, social studies, world languages, art, music, physical education and any other subject taught. (Early childhood centers need not segment learner outcomes into specific subject areas.)**
 - Trinity First uses Curriculum Trak Curriculum Trak PDF of all Subjects and Grades is [linked](#).

- A current schedule is prepared for each classroom or teacher, indicating clearly when subjects (activities) or classes are taught and during what periods.**
 - All [2024 Schedules](#)

- 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).**
 - [Class charts](#) with instructional minutes breakdown

- [Analysis of the results of standardized tests](#) administered for each grade level (required for grades 3 and above) for the past three years, including a description of how this information is used to evaluate and improve student learning, is provided.**

Trinity First transitioned to MAP testing in Spring of 2022. Prior to that, the Iowa Test of Basic Skills was used, and reading and math benchmarks were assessed through Acadience for every student. Since Trinity First began using MAP testing, Acadience data is being gathered for students who are below the 30th percentile or upon teacher recommendation. The school principal discusses the data with the teachers to look at possible need for curriculum evaluation, support services, instructional materials, and other supplemental needs. The school principal discusses the data with the SPED teacher to look at overall progress to make sure students in need are currently being serviced and to make sure we are not overlooking others. MAP data is the primary way all student progress is tracked. When needed, students are administered other measures such as Acadience Reading or Math to substantiate student performance when considering placement options in Title or special education.

- [Test Evidence for the past three years](#)

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:

[Class Schedules](#)

[Religion Instructional Time](#)

[Faith Integration Examples](#)

[Bible Curriculum](#)

Comments: The Christian faith is at the heart of everything we do at Trinity First. Not only is it a subject taught daily, it is integrated into each subject throughout our school day.

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

YES

NO

Identify and list supporting Evidence or Practices:

[Complete school curriculum](#)

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.

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.

Explanation:

Each level of learning at Trinity First shares the cohesive culture of TFL. [‘Building a Family of Culturally Diverse Christian Disciples’](#) is painted on our gym wall and helps us share our overriding purpose for our ministry. We strive to create a culture that reflects the family of God. The [School Rule](#) is taught beginning with our youngest classes and is reinforced through the year. We also teach our students the following phrase “Trinity First Students WORK!” to help convey that learning and life both require work and that ‘work’ is really a gift given to us beginning in the Garden of Eden. Chapels are shared among a broad range of ages. The lunch room is shared by K5-8th grade. Much of what students experience as they progress through the grades is similar. Not only does the school culture bridge the gap between stages for students, but the curriculum does as well. For example, Shurley English teaches students ‘jingles’ that are repeated from 2nd to 8th grade. The school counselor is also available to those struggling with transitions and does SEL (Social and Emotional Learning) classes in order to discuss how students can be prepared for the coming week, school homework, tasks, and how to interact with other students. TFL also has a summer program called Summer Bridge to Success (SBS) that provides extended learning opportunities in June. Boys and Girls club is also a time where students can discuss concerns to a group of the same sex. Evidence includes:

- [SEL \(Social Emotional Learning\) Classes](#) that prepares students to deal with change and grow in social, emotional, and executive functioning skills. SEL gives kids tools to form productive study habits and skills and prepares them for their next stage in education and life. All K to 8 students receive 30 minutes of SEL a week.
- [Summer Bridge to Success](#) prepares students for the next stage of school with further education. Over 80% of our K-8 student body participates in this program.
- [Boys and Girls Club time](#) is a time to discuss concerns as students mature—topics have included how our faith relates to who we are becoming as young men and women, sex education and our changing bodies, friendships and relationship issues, behavior concerns, questions about highschool, and other things which students are concerned about. Beginning in 3rd grade, each class is assigned a time divide up between the boys and girls for 30 minutes of time each week with either Pastor Jon Kuehne or Ms. Carrie Butcher.

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

Explanation:

As stated above, Trinity First shares one cohesive culture among all grades, but curriculum is shared too! All of Trinity First's curriculum is used on

- [Shurley English](#) curriculum is taught from 1st to 8th grade.
- [TCI Social Studies](#) curriculum is taught from Kindergarten to 8th grade.
- [TCI Science](#) curriculum is taught from Kindergarten to 8th grade.
- [McGrawHill](#) Mathematics curriculum is taught from Kindergarten to 8th grade.
- [SuperKids](#) Reading curriculum is taught from Kindergarten to 2nd grade.
- [Wonders](#) Reading curriculum is taught from 3rd to 6th grade.
- [StudySync](#) Reading curriculum is taught from 7th to 8th grade.
- [One in Christ Religion](#) curriculum is taught from Kindergarten to 8th grade.
- [A Reason For](#) handwriting curriculum is taught from 1st to 8th grade.

- The school quantifies, tracks and publicly celebrates student success.

Explanation:

Trinity First quantifies and tracks student success through MAP testing charts which show the students growth over the past few school years. Teachers have used this to encourage and praise the growth of students privately so that it doesn't reveal their score to the class. Examples of this are linked below and in section 5:08. Students are celebrated publicly in graduation and end of year ceremonies.

- MAP testing score charts which track and quantify student achievement.
- [Graduations, individual awards, and other recognitions.](#)

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

Explanation:

Trinity First leaders provide guidelines for [professional development](#) and pair newer teachers with mentors. Leaders also provide clear [guidelines](#) for tasks and objectives that teachers need to accomplish at the beginning and end of each school year. The annual staff retreat is also a way in which leaders support teachers. The [staff retreats](#) include clear instruction on best practices, procedures, and teaching methodology.

- [Staff development plans](#)
- [Professional Development](#)

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:

[Evidence is categorized by section](#)

Comments:

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.

- Our Curriculum is aligned with standards and is documented as seen from the evidence in the [Curriculum Documentation](#) and [Curriculum Trak](#).

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

- The [curriculum](#) that we use is documented using [Curriculum Trak](#) and in our [Curriculum Documentation](#) and is monitored and updated on an ongoing basis to ensure that it continues to meet the needs and challenge all students.
- Trinity First continues to evaluate and assess the curriculum using the [Curriculum Evaluation Rubric](#)
- The Curriculum is challenging as it meets the [Standards](#) required and is clearly laid out in [Curriculum Trak](#)

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

- We utilize a rubric in order to ensure that our curriculum is evaluated in order that it would [best serve our students](#) and the standards and latest research of best practices. [Curriculum Evaluation Rubric](#)

The curriculum is not only rigorous, but also ensures very student with Christ-centered learning as seen in the example of

- the [Formation of the Solar System lesson](#)
- The [3/4 Reading Lesson w Faith Integration](#)
- The [History Lesson with Faith Integration](#)
- A Reason For- Our handwriting curriculum has the students write Bible verses each week

The curriculum is both rigorous and and sequential as seen in [Curriculum Documentation](#)

The curriculum is aligned with LCMS teachings.

X

Our Curriculum [aligns to the teachings of LCMS](#).

- 1st-8th grades use the [One in Christ curriculum](#) from Concordia Publishing House while
- K3-K5 uses the [Enduring Faith](#) from CPH.
- Older classes supplement with Luther's Small Catechism as well.
- Our 3-8th grade curriculum is taught by an [LCMS ordained pastor](#)
- Our handwriting curriculum uses Bible verses that students write each week.

X

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

Trinity First ensures that all students have the opportunity to pursue their God-given talents in a variety of ways. Although, because of Covid some of the activities were scaled back, the school still seeks to encourage students' passions and talents in several ways.

There is room within the curriculum for student choice in order that they can have variety according to their own interests. Some of those ways include

- choosing their own independent reading material
- Choice in [center work](#)
- deciding between activities on a [Bingo board to practice skills](#), or
- choice in a [culminating activity](#) to show mastery of a topic.
- The ability to explore using [hands-on](#) activities

In these ways, students are able to pursue their interests within the curriculum.

During our [Summer Bridge Program](#), students are given the opportunity to experience various skills, such as [archery](#), coding, art, [climbing](#) and scientific discovery. Often this is a time that students are able to uncover [new interests](#) and use them as a springboard for future learning.

Within our curriculum, students get exposure to [choir and music](#), as well as the [Spring Musical](#). While all students are required to participate in the musical, they also have the opportunity to try out for speaking, acting and backstage positions. Our students also have the opportunity to practice their presentation skills by [leading chapel](#). This gives our students the ability to pursue various talents and allows them to explore and develop those skills.

Along with that, we also provide extracurricular activities so that students can explore other areas of interest. Some of those include Lego League, [Cross Country](#), [Basketball](#), [Worship Team](#). Our [Lego League](#) began a few years ago and has been a great way for students to grow in many different areas, such as coding, leadership and speaking skills, project management, and scientific experimentation.

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

Trinity first strives to integrate Christ into many aspects of the curriculum so that students receive a Christ-centered education. In this way, the Gospel is proclaimed not only in scripture classes, but throughout all of the curriculum as seen in the following examples of faith integration throughout the curriculum

- [History Lesson](#)
- [Science Lesson](#)
- [3/4 Reading Lesson w Faith Integration](#)
- And [other examples throughout the the curriculum](#)

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:

[Evidence is categorized by section](#)

Comments:

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

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

Teachers implement classroom instructional strategies that provide students with the knowledge, creativity, skills and understanding to become problem solvers, decision makers and responsible Christian citizens.

Explanation:

Teachers giving students tools to become problem solvers, decision makers and responsible Christian citizens is crucial to holistic student growth. Some of the tools you will see in the present folder includes, but is not limited to:

- [SEL \(Social Emotional Learning\) Classes](#) that prepares students to solve problems and make social, emotional, and executive functioning decisions. Items in proof include slides, planning strategy worksheets, time management lessons, and SMART goal lesson plans. SEL also gives kids tools to form productive study habits and skills.

- Times when teachers draw students’ attention to Christian themes in classes that are not Religion. Asking questions such as “What does Scripture say about this?” prepares students to be [responsible Christian citizens](#) in all matters of life.

X Classroom instruction involves teaching strategies and settings that address diverse student needs and accommodate individual learning styles as fully as possible.

Explanation:

Teachers’ instruction, which accommodates individual learning styles, is absolutely necessary to keep students from falling behind or through the cracks. Some of these accommodation evidences you will see in the present folder includes, but is not limited to:

- In 3rd grade spelling class, some students are performing at a 1st grade level in reading, so they complete activities in [spelling](#) and [reading](#) that reinforce the lessons they’ve been receiving in Special Education resource classes. They are able to practice concepts at their level of need and ability, though different from the assignment the rest of their class is working on.
- For younger grades, students often learn through [hands-on-activities](#) and tactile interaction. [Center learning](#) provides opportunities for students to learn in a different environment and by different means.
- Student led activities such as [presentations](#), and [student led Shurley English](#) call and response activities, allow students to learn from their peers.
- Teachers intentionally budgeting time after direct instruction in order to provide individuals in the classrooms with [independent support](#).
- We also provide Title services and [SPED](#) to eligible students.

X Evidence of active student engagement exists in every classroom.

Explanation:

Student engagement is an important part of student growth. Children simply learn best when they are able to interact with the material they are learning. Some of the student engagement evidence you will see in the folder linked below includes, but is not limited to:

- **Kindergarten:** handling instruments, physical matching cards, name writing practice, reading center, finger art, play-do and block centers, letter matching puzzles, and art.
- **Grade 2**—Students presenting on whales in their second grade science class.
- **Grade 3/4**—Students in 3rd & 4th grade have jobs to lead their classroom. Students may lead their class while walking in line, lead the class in saying the pledges and a prayer at the beginning of each school day, and so on. This picture shows a student reading a Psalm aloud as a way to introduce Bible Study class time and show leadership to their class in sharing their faith.
- **Grade 7/8**—Each week 7th and 8th grade students have jobs to lead their classmates. Students may lead by reading a devotion, leading in pledges, or praying at lunch time. The photo in the 7/8 file shows the jobs they have as a way to manage classroom time. This is above and beyond regular classroom participation. Students are also required to participate in small groups to develop social/emotional skills. These group settings are usually small in order for each participant’s voice to be heard. Each student is expected to contribute to the whole group.

- Evidence is contained in the [5.5.3 Folder](#)

Service learning is a component of the school’s required program.

Explanation

Service learning is a component of TFL’s school and culture. Some of the student service learning evidence you will see in the folder linked below includes, but is not limited to:

- Students participate in trash pick-up in and around the school.
- TFL students support various ministries through weekly chapel offerings. Some of the ministries supported by our chapel offering include Samaritan’s Purse, Lutheran Bible Translators, and World Vision.
- Furthermore, every day, students serve the school in the lunchroom by cleaning tables, sweeping floors, picking up trash, and breaking down lunch tables so that the gym can be used for other periods.
- Evidence is contained in the [5.5.4 Folder](#)

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:

[Evidence categorized by section](#)

Comments:

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.

- [Each August, staff participate in two full days of development meetings](#) and relationship building to set us up for success throughout the new school year. Staff discusses schoolwide ministry philosophy, school culture, schoolwide philosophies and expectations for student behavior management and

responses to parent/family situations, [best practices for teaching & learning](#), usage of school communication systems for continued collaboration throughout the year, etc.

- Administration structures the school year schedule to include staff development days throughout the year as well as at the [end of the school year in June](#).

Teachers pursue opportunities to interact with colleagues seeking ways to improve.

- Teachers make time in their work day, when possible, to [seek advice](#) from each other about student behavior, parent concerns, academic needs, and teaching methods.

Teachers work together to share responsibility for student learning.

- At Trinity First we are blessed with God’s gift of resource teachers who support classroom teachers in supporting student needs at the Title I and Special Education levels in math and language, as well as a reading specialist. Because of our high population of students who qualify for special education and Title I support, this is a critical need for our school! Classroom teachers regularly collaborate with resource teachers to align curriculum goals for each student at the levels of their abilities and needs. In addition, teachers across a range of grade levels collaborate to engage students of all age levels as reading buddies or to [join in classroom learning](#). Resource teachers and classroom teachers alike recognize that we [share responsibility](#) for student learning as we work together and support each other.

Teachers regularly share content, resources, instructional techniques and management skills.

- Teachers discuss [strategies for effective curriculum instruction](#) to support student learning.

School leaders empower teachers with time and resources that facilitate opportunities for communication and collaboration.

- Three days a week, in the absence of staff devotion meetings, teachers are expected to arrive at school 40 minutes before students arrive. This time allows teachers the opportunity to meet with each other, without disruption of teaching schedules, to [seek mutual support](#) in improving instruction and supporting student 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:

Comments:

Teachers meet 2 mornings each week for staff devotions and schoolwide communication. In addition, teachers use 3 other mornings each week before students arrive to communicate and collaborate. This collaboration takes place in many different forms; included in the evidence are notes from our beginning- and end-of-year staff meetings, as well as overall professional development plans led by the school principal. We also communicate via text and email in addition to formal and informal face-to-face meetings as needed.

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

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

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

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

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

Identify and list supporting Evidence or Practices:

The teachers at Trinity First are continually incorporating technology into their instruction and the students' learning process at school. All students have Chromebook computers. Each classroom has a Promethean smart TV that is used to support and enhance the students' learning. All teachers have a laptop computer and are regularly using them to more easily communicate with staff and students, enter grades on Gradelink,

search the internet for new ideas, and a variety of other uses. Our Kindergarten classes use iPads for online games and our SuperKids curriculum. The first through eighth graders use the Chromebooks for research, testing, class assignments, educational games, typing practice, or whatever else their teachers feel is to their benefit. All classes, grades K-8 use Ipads or Chromebooks to take the online NWEA MAP testing in which teachers then get immediate feedback and information to help meet the needs of students. Teachers are also using the online components of our curriculum in English, Math, Reading, Science, and Social Studies.

Faculty members have a variety of methods to acquire the necessary technology skills. We have a dedicated IT person to assist with this. The teachers with more skills and familiarity with technology will also mentor those that desire to learn more. Teachers also attend online workshops or conferences through Professional Learning Board (behavior, curriculum, etc), Acadience (for progress monitoring), Orton Gillingham (reading and phonics teaching) as well as workshops to learn more about technology.

Each classroom incorporates technology as is developmentally appropriate and beneficial to the students as they mature and need these skills for further schooling and their future careers. An examination of lesson plans in Curriculum Trak will show the variety of ways teachers integrate technology to sharpen student skills. We have several Online Learning Days each school year to help students practice their skills accessing technology and using our online curriculum resources, like ALEKS, TCI, and Reveal Math. Our 3rd-8th grade classrooms use ALEKS, which is an online program with individualized, adaptive, differentiated learning in all K-8 subjects based on student's assessment results.

In addition to the required classroom use of technology, Trinity has also adopted the use of [LEGO League](#) to teach robotics, coding skills, engineering skills, and teamwork. The LEGO league uses iPads and scratch based programming.

Trinity has also purchased a [Lu interactive gym system](#). This is an interactive gym system that the students use which incorporates academics into physical fitness.

We also have a professional grade audio mixer (Allen & Heath QU-16) that we utilize to create a learning rich environment in our chapel that helps the students to learn more efficiently and effectively while they are in a large environment that would otherwise be difficult to hear and learn in. We also have three high quality professional cameras (BirdDog Brand) that we use to live stream through our projector and onto a screen. These cameras are also used to record and distribute student-led chapel services to parents and family members of the students that led.

Trinity now has a [dedicated IT person](#) to facilitate all issues regarding our use of computer technology.

[Example of Students and Staff Using Technology](#)

[Online Learning Day Documents](#)

[Technology Plan](#)

Comments:

Our use of technology is an ongoing area that we look forward to improving.

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

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

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

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

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

Identify and list supporting Evidence or Practices:

- [MAP Test Results](#)
- [Description of Testing Analysis](#)
- [Report Card Samples from Gradelink \(SIS\)](#)
- [Progress Monitoring: Acadience \(Reading & Math\)](#)
- [Curriculum Evaluation Rubric](#)
- [Multiple forms of assessments](#)

Comments:

Teachers work to monitor student progress continually in their classrooms. Multiple forms of assessments are used within subject curricula. We also use Acadience testing for progress monitoring in reading and math. MAP tests are administered three times annually, in the fall, winter, and spring. Instruction is [differentiated](#) according to student needs. Our special education program helps to further assist students with special needs.

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.

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

Trinity First recognizes the value of quality, Christ-centered instruction for the benefit of all learners. Trinity First teachers and staff implement instruction with a variety of instructional methods, materials, and forms of assessment. Teachers and staff engage in collaboration together as well as in-school and external staff development throughout the year. Therefore, teachers and staff at Trinity First are equipped and skilled to engage students in varied activities and experiences that foster growth and development for each child holistically. Trinity First prioritizes Christ-centered Bible instruction, but even beyond Bible classes, curricula integrate the Christian faith and Biblical values into many lessons and teachable moments throughout each day. Because we believe strongly that each child is made in the image of God and therefore has precious inherent value as His creation, we attend to each child on an individual basis according to their learning needs. We want to see each student succeed according to their abilities! We analyze a variety of forms of assessment in the general classroom and in support classes and use that information process to strive to meet the needs of all learners, including those with high needs in our Special Education program and in resource classes with our reading and math specialist teachers.

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.

We continue to improve our technology and make sure our technology plan aligns with current practices.

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

STANDARD	RATING
5:03	3
5:04	3
5:05	3
5:06	3
5:07	3
5:08	3

Total:	18
Average: (Total ÷ 6)	3

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 to whom the school refers students and families
- Evidence of background checks and MinistrySafe training for staff and volunteers
- List of first-aid materials
- Wellness plan
- Volunteer handbook
- Admissions counselor position
- Enrollment Handbook
- Registration Handbook

Potential Practices

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

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

Required Responses

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

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

- Prospective families tour the facility and meet with our principal who describes Trinity and the services we offer. We place emphasis on the Christian faith taught in each class throughout the day and we discuss any special needs that the child or family may have.
- No families are turned away if student numbers are not exceeded and if we believe we are equipped to meet the needs of the student & family.
- No families are turned away based on their ability to pay. We have created a tuition program that is called the [Parent Participation Program](#). This program is based on the belief that parents are a child's most valuable and influential teacher. Therefore, if we want to have the greatest impact possible on a child we need to have influence on the family. We also believe that family participation is good for our school community in terms of student advancement and school safety.
- Prospective families complete the [Prospective Parent Form](#) (English or Spanish) and submit an application fee.
- Upon acceptance, families complete all other admissions forms
 - All policies related to student admissions: [Parent Handbook](#)
 - TFLS Referral program fliers: [English and Spanish](#).
 - [Family Household Income Tiers](#)

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

- We have a trained counselor on staff that works individually with students on a regular basis and meets with [students as needed](#).
- Our counselor also conducts [SEL classes](#) with all grades K 3 - 8th.
- Our counselor is available for individual meetings with parents or to assist with conversations between teachers and parents.
- Our counselor conducts [monthly parenting classes](#).
- Our counselor assists teachers with problem solving strategies for classroom management and individual student needs.
- Our counselor works with students and families with truancy issues to see how the school can come alongside the family and support them to break down barriers that are keeping students from attending school.
- Helps assist families and students when preparing to make choices for highschool / college and future career decisions

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

- Principal or administrator gives a personal tour of the facility at the entrance of each new student.

- Trinity First hosts a Parent Orientation Day before the start of each school year with multiple times (11am, 1pm, 5pm) offered during the day for all parents to receive information and complete registration forms.
 - [Parent Orientation 1](#)
 - [Parent Orientation 2](#)
 - [Parent Orientation Passport](#)
- Trinity First hosts 3 separate Back-to-School Nights in September for all parents to meet and greet teachers and form bridges between home and school.
- During August of each new school year, teachers visit with each student’s family (K-8th) to build a good relationship and share information about the upcoming school year.
- Parents and students are invited to an [Installation Service](#) to celebrate the beginning of the new school year and join in fellowship with each other.
- Parent / Teacher conferences are required in the fall and spring to build relationships while sharing student progress.
- Parents and teachers meet any time throughout the year as needed.
- We have two Spanish interpreters and one Amharic interpreter available on site. All are available at parent conferences/meetings to translate or assist as needed.

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

- Teachers reach out to next year’s families immediately in June to begin building relationships.
- [Summer Bridge to Success \(SBS\)](#) is offered for students K5-7th grade to continue learning their curriculums in math and reading/ELA. Art and STEM classes are also offered during their SBS experience.
 - [Art for SBS](#)
 - [Chapel for SBS](#)
 - [STEM for SBS](#)
- Teachers share and review individual students’ progress with the subsequent grade-level teacher.
- Cumulative annual records are [kept on file](#) for each student.
- Student’s final progress report is printed and filed in their permanent record.
- Middle school teachers give every student personalized advisory sessions for 8th graders as they transition to high school.
- Teachers and students interact across grade levels, through activities such as reading buddies and other activities.
 - [Games with 5/6 and K3/K4 1](#)
 - [Games with 5/6 and K3/K4 2](#)
 - [Playdoh Party for Pastor Appreciation](#)
 - [Reading Buddies 1st and 6th 1](#)
 - [Reading Buddies 1st and 6th 2](#)
 - [Tutoring Time](#)
- Students who are struggling to meet grade level expectations are referred to the special education teacher for consideration in resource or special education groupings. Students that

need a boost to meet grade level expectations may work with the reading specialist or Title teacher. Students may go on to receive a special education evaluation. If a student is identified as in need of special education, they are served by our SPED teacher using an educational plan. Students with certain health issues may receive an accommodation plan.

- [Education Plan Example 1](#)
- [Education Plan Example 2](#)
- [Accommodation Plan Example 1](#)
- Graduation procedures: at Trinity First we follow these guidelines for graduation:
 - Students must meet grade level and our expectations for promotion/graduation.
 - Students' advancement or retention is determined from academic progress, teacher recommendation and parent consultation.
- Trinity First does not advise retention. Research shows that while a child may see a year progression, it is short lived and does not appear to benefit the child in the long run. (see [Parent Handbook](#) p. 30)

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

6. Worship Team & music lessons as requested

[TFL Worship Team 1](#)

[TFL Worship Team 2](#)

- Athletics: Cross Country & Basketball [Athletic handbook](#)
 - [Basketball 1](#)
 - [Basketball 2](#)
- Choir for grades K-8, including Singing at Area Churches such as [Family of Christ](#) Lutheran and Worship Team at [Faith Lutheran](#)
- Annual Spring Musical
 - [Spring Musical 1](#)
 - [Spring Musical 2](#)
 - [Spring Musical 3](#)
 - [Spring Musical 4](#)
- Accelerated learning program for high achieving students - Dr. David K.
- Participation in National Lutheran Schools Week including joining other Lutheran Schools at Concordia Academy once a year.
 - [NLSW Flyer 2024](#)
 - [Twins Day 2023 1](#)
 - [Twins Day 2023 2](#)
- LEGO League
 - [LEGO League 1](#)
 - [LEGO League 2](#)
 - [LEGO League 3](#)
- [Learn-to-Skate program \(DINOmites\)](#)
 - [DINOmites 1](#)

[DINomites 2](#)

[DINomites 3](#)

- Field trips to local sites during school year and SBS including Chanhassen Landscape Arboretum, Science Museum of St. Paul, History Museum of St. Paul, Mill City Museum, and others.
- Field trips to local sites during the school year and SBS include visiting a farm, Beach Day at Waconia or Minnetrista park, DINomites skating in Minneapolis, Base Camp, Minnesota Zoo, Valleyfair, and others.

[Field Trip 1](#)

[Field Trip 2](#)

[Field Trip 3](#)

[Field Trip 4](#)

[Field Trip 5](#)

[Field Trip 6](#)

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

8. All students attend weekly chapel- “little kids” chapel prek-K5, “big kids” chapel 1st-8th

[Littles Chapel](#)

- Each grade leads a chapel service during the year

[Chapel 1](#)

[Chapel 2](#)

[Video of 2nd Grade Chapel](#)

[Video of 1st Grade Chapel](#)

[Video of 5th Grade Chapel](#)

- Sing in choir at area churches-most recently [Family of Christ](#) and [Faith Lutheran](#) (Covid limited our church interactions until last school year)
- Students lead prayer in the classroom throughout the day; prior to lunch; and at the end of the day with the whole school

[Prayer during Closing](#)

[Leading Closing](#)

- Students lead prayer and devotions during athletic events
- Students write and share about their faith during Bible classes

[Bible Example 1](#)

[Bible Example 2](#)

[Bible Example 3](#)

[Bible Example 4](#)

[Bible Example 5](#)

- Recitation of memory work according to grade level abilities
- Chapel offering collections:

2023-2024 World Vision

[World Vision Slide 1](#)

[World Vision Slide 2](#)

2022-2023 Lutheran Bible Translators

2021-2022 Samaritan's Purse

2020-2021 COVID

2019-2020 Camp Omega

- Service Projects in the spring such as food donations to nearby food shelves, raising money for a program that serves adults with disabilities, picking up garbage around the school, and other opportunities as needs arise.

[Food Shelf 1](#)

[Food Shelf 2](#)

[Picking Up Garbage 1](#)

[Picking Up Garbage 2](#)

- Daily closing services for all classes and staff are held 3:15-3:30 in the chapel. Parents are encouraged to attend as well.
- Students are also encouraged to demonstrate their faith when out in the world through their actions and interactions with others when playing sports, praying in public, on field trips, on buses, and on choir singing trips.

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

- All staff are currently trained in First-Aid and CPR. They renew this training bi-annually.
- Parents are not allowed to supervise children without a staff person present.
- All staff have had [background checks](#).
- Staff and Volunteers complete [Ministry Safe](#) training
- Volunteers are required to do [background checks](#) and required to participate in orientation/training with our volunteer coordinator.
- [Volunteer handbook](#)
- [Volunteer Orientation](#)
- Students are actively supervised at all times by staff or trained personnel, including recess.
(See [Teacher & Staff Handbook](#), p. 9 & 26)

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

Our before and after school care program is called [Tiger Club](#). This program is designed to assist parents who are unable to drop off or pick up at the designated start and end times of school. Tiger Club is a paid program, but is still much less expensive than other similar types of programs. Our director regularly sends out [messages to parents](#) on Remind regarding trimester payments and notifications.

The after school care program is larger in scope and students are divided into groups by age. This year, we have two groups (Kindergarten 3 through 2nd Grade, and 3rd through 8th grade); however, in the past we have had more groups depending on student numbers. The schedule varies by group, but each group has time for recess, homework, bathroom break, snack, and free time. The program is directed by one of our staff members, but each group is run by trained college students, many of whom have majors in Education, Children's

or Family Ministry. Volunteers are recruited to assist students with homework and provide additional supervision.

Tiger Club also provides care for siblings who participate in school athletics, musical practice, or other extra curricular activities so parents only need to pick up their children once. It is also for bus kids until their scheduled bus times.

The before school care program is smaller and less structured due to lower demand. It is run by staff members and includes students in grades K3-8.

Workers of Trinity First's Tiger Club after school program are recruited during career fairs at nearby colleges such as North Central College and Concordia University, St. Paul. Occasionally, we will also recruit community and parent volunteers.

All potential workers are first screened through an application and interview process run by our director. A background check is run and references are called to deem a good fit. Once hired, all Tiger Club workers are trained on-site by the director and Ministry Safe training. They also work with another seasoned worker who also helps show them the ropes. The Tiger Club director also keeps all workers accountable.

[Tiger Club 1](#)

[Tiger Club 2](#)

[Tiger Club 3](#)

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

We do not provide child care services beyond our afterschool care program.

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

N/A We do not provide child care services beyond our afterschool care program.

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

Students follow procedures drills (as described below in #12) for emergencies such as fire, tornado, and intruders. Each classroom procedure varies depending on the placement of the building and the safest exit or protection procedure.

Dates of emergency drills [2023-2024](#)

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

- All building doors are locked during school hours, an intercom system with a buzzer and camera is in place for use.
- All teachers receive health information about their students from the Minneapolis Public School nurse.
- All teachers have a hard copy of emergency forms for students in their care.
- Medicine and the medication plan is sent with the teacher on all field trips.
- All staff are trained in adult & child First Aid and CPR.
- Emergency exit plans are posted in classrooms (linked below in #13).
- Safety procedures are listed in [Teacher & Staff Handbook](#) p. 24, [Parent Handbook](#) p. 24-25

- and [Crisis Management Plan](#).
- All teachers prepare their students for emergencies by practicing safety drills. These safety drills are introduced and described immediately in the first 1-2 weeks of each school year, practiced repetitively during the first 3-6 weeks of each school year, and drills are administered throughout the school year according to the schedule listed in #11 above
 - [Crisis Management Plan](#)
 - First Aid Around the School:
 - [Main Hallway First Aid/Blood Disposal Bags](#)

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

Teachers are provided with facility orientation to be aware of areas throughout the building for safety and protection of students.

Using [exit plans posted in each room](#), teachers are trained on the drills for their specific classroom and area of the school: Tornado, fire, & lockdown drills.

- Teachers annually review all safety procedures (fire drill, tornado, lockdown and other emergency procedures), arrival/dismissal procedures and supervision policies. See [Teacher & Staff Handbook](#) p. 8, 24) The [Crisis Management Plan](#) is reviewed annually.
- All staff carry walkie talkies, Go Bags for immediate communication at all times, and their staff ID badge while supervising students. [Classroom “Go Bags”](#), [Contents of Go Bags](#)
- All teachers are trained in mandatory reporting for child abuse recognition and mental health/suicide prevention. ([Teacher & Staff Handbook](#) p. 25)
- Teachers maintain a current CPR/AED certificate through the American Heart Association.
- AED on site and training provided during CPR/First Aid training. [AED in Main Hallway](#), [AED Carrying Case](#)
- Teachers are required to complete the Sexual Abuse Awareness training video and quiz through [Ministry Safe](#)

16. How are student health records maintained and used?

- A visiting Minneapolis Public School nurse maintains student health records. These health records are kept in a locked file onsite that is referenced and updated annually. Health plans are adjusted and new health concerns arise during the school year. Student [Health File 2](#)
- Immunizations are documented and kept on file with each student’s registration forms. Trinity First requires every student to have updated immunizations as described in [Parent Handbook p. 18-19](#).
- Parents provide signed paper forms from the doctor regarding food allergy and medication plan.
- Student emergency forms are kept on file in the office, in their classroom, and on field trips.
- Medication plan is found in the [Medical Plan Binder](#) in the school office and with the medicine located in the main office, in a locked cabinet.
- Each teacher has a medication plan for their students with their emergency card.

- Trinity First has a binder of compiled health policies and plans signed by a nurse located in the school office. These policies are referenced in both our [Teacher & Staff Handbook](#) p. 19 and [Parent Handbooks](#) p. 18-21. There are some additional forms in this health binder for administering medications at school, clinical requests, parent requests and immunization information.
- Trinity First uses the MN department of health (DHS) website for parent notifications, information printouts, etc.

17. Describe the food services provided.

- Trinity First holds a [food service license](#) through the State of Minnesota which is managed by Andrea Olson, Food Service Director.
- We serve [breakfast and lunch](#) daily using CKC Good Food catering company.
- Trinity First is 70% free and reduced price meals [NonPublicReport 2024](#).

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

- Trinity First has a licensed school counselor in the State of Minnesota on staff. She provides counseling services to students & families on site as needed.
- Campus pastor is available for counseling.
- Trinity First recommends various Christian counseling services, including resources through the district

Required Evidence

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

- [Enrollment / admission policy](#)
- [Crisis emergency plan](#)
- [MinistrySafe training certificates](#) for all staff, coaches, activity sponsors, and volunteers working directly with students

Required Indicator of Success

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

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

YES

NO

Identify and list supporting Evidence or Practices:

[Enrollment/Admissions](#) as copied from our [Parent Handbook](#)

Federal funding provides for the following services through Minneapolis Public School District:

- Transportation for Trinity First School on Minneapolis Public School routes
- School nurse
- Evaluation and services for IEP [IEP example](#)
- Transportation for IEP services (speech specialists, etc.)
- Textbook funding
- [Title I](#) funding for student services
- [Title II](#) funding for professional development
 - Trinity First [Intent to Participate](#) in Title services
 - Trinity First [MDE Nonpublic Report 23-34](#)

Comments:

Trinity First uses Minneapolis Public School services for transportation, for nurse, and for special education evaluation, Individualized Education Plans, and Title services.

General Indicators of Success

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

See Page 8 for Scoring Rubric.

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.

[Trinity First Admissions Policies](#)

Permanent cumulative records for each student are maintained, stored and shared in compliance with state and federal law.

[Permanent records](#) for all current enrolled students, graduates, and transfer students including grades, tests, and IEPs are maintained and secured in a [locked cabinet](#) in the administrative hallway.

The school administers and practices written procedures for addressing students’ emotional, social and psychological needs.

See [Parent Handbook](#), p. 21-24.

- Staff are trained in mandated reporting and this is described in [Teacher & Staff Handbook](#) p. 25.
- When an individual is suffering an emotional crisis in a manner that appears harmful to self or others, we follow these guidelines as best fits the situation:
 - Call for A-Team or nearest staff member
 - Isolate - remove other children from the area
 - Secure - as best as possible, remove surrounding items to minimize danger to self or others
 - When help arrives, team will decide the best course of action for the individual. Most times, this moves to situational management as needed.
 - If severe, team may advise to call COPE and/or 911.
 - For student - call parent.
 - For staff or parent, call emergency contact or 911.
- We work with a student body that consists of a significant number of students who have experienced trauma, have high social/emotional needs and families in crisis. Our staff keeps an open dialogue to prepare and support one another as we minister to these children and families. Our responses to these needs vary widely based on our assessments of the situations.

Procedures are established for evaluating students for promotion and/or graduation.

[Evaluation records](#) (tests, grades) are kept for each student to show readiness for promotion and 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:

[Trinity First Admissions Policies](#)

[Permanent records](#)

[Parent Handbook p. 21-24](#) - caring for students' social, emotional, psychological needs

[Teacher & Staff Handbook](#) p. 24-25 - Mandated reporting practices

[Evaluation records](#)

Comments:

All policies for admission are stated in the [Parent Handbook](#).

Permanent records are kept and maintained within state and federal law.

Trinity First follows guidelines for responding to students' social, emotional, and psychological needs, as well as mandated reporting according to state law.

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.

- Athletic programs are offered including cross country running and basketball teams. [Athletic Handbook](#)
- Students and parents show evidence of agreement with Athletic Handbook as seen on last page of [Athletic Handbook](#)
- Students participate in an annual [musical](#).
- [Worship team](#) is offered for students to participate in small group music opportunities. Piano lessons are available for individual music development.
- Accelerated learning program for high achieving students.

Extracurricular activities are carefully supervised by trained personnel.

All leaders, coaches, and volunteers are trained for supervision of activities.

[Volunteer handbook](#)

[Volunteer Helping on a Project](#)

[Volunteer Sharing](#)

[Volunteer Playing Music](#)

Those who supervise extracurricular activities accept the purpose of the school.

- All leaders, coaches, and volunteers for activities accept the purpose of the school.
- Coach Agreements: [Cross Country](#), [Basketball](#)
- [Spectators accept](#) the purpose of the school.

Background checks are completed and on file for those who supervise extracurricular activities.

[Background checks](#)

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

Highly Functional (4)

Operational (3)

Emerging (2)

Not Evident (1)

Identify and list supporting Evidence or Practices:

- [Athletic handbook](#)
 - Participants agree to athletic handbook policies as seen on final page of [Athletic Handbook](#)
- Annual Spring [Musical](#)
- [Worship Team](#)
- [Volunteer handbook](#) for supervision of all extracurricular activities.
- Leaders, coaches accept school purpose [Cross Country](#), [Basketball](#)
- Background checks [completed and are on file](#) for all who supervise extracurricular activities.

Comments:

All our students are offered opportunities to express their God given talents and abilities by being involved in a variety of activities.

6:04: The school enacts a wide variety of policies and procedures that ensure the safety of each student and allow the school to comply with national, state and local mandates.

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

Immunization documentation, health tests and screenings conducted at the school conform with local and state laws.

- Immunizations are documented and kept on file with each student’s registration forms. Trinity First requires every student to have updated immunizations as described in [Parent Handbook p. 19](#).
- Immunization records are on file in the building; a Minneapolis Public School nurse also has these documents on file in a locked cabinet.

[Student Health File](#)

First-aid supplies are available and readily accessible to authorized personnel.

[First-aid supplies](#) are available and readily accessible to authorized personnel in each classroom, Tiger Club location, and the school office.

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.

[CPR Certification](#)

[Medication administration log](#)

[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.

[Teacher & Staff Handbook](#) - Mandated Reporter Training p. 25

[Ministry Safe](#)

The school ensures the safety and security of its students when online.

[TFL’s policy regarding internet safety](#)

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

Highly Functional (4)

Operational (3)

Emerging (2)

Not Evident (1)

Identify and list supporting Evidence or Practices:

- Student health records on file in locked cabinet [Student Health File 2](#)
- First-aid supplies readily accessible in all locations where students are supervised.
 - [Main Office First Aid Kit, Contents of Office First Aid Kit](#)
 - [AED in Main Hallway, AED Carrying Case](#)
 - Each classroom has a “Go Bag”. [Classroom “Go Bags”](#), [Contents of Go Bags](#)
- Requirements for safety are conducted and [recorded](#) (i.e., fire, tornado, intruder and other drills).
- Plans are developed and implemented for blood-borne pathogens, asbestos, CPR, first-aid training and the distribution of medication.
- Only designated office/health staff administer 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.
- [Teacher & Staff Handbook](#) - Mandated Reporter Training p. 25
- The school ensures the safety and security of its students when online.
 - [TFL’s policy regarding internet safety](#)
 - [Guide for Technology Usage](#)

Comments:

Trinity First provides a safe environment where we assure each student’s safety in all locations and activities.

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:

[MN Food License](#)

MN Application for benefits [English](#) and [Spanish](#)

[CKC menu lunch](#)

[CKC menu breakfast](#)

[Sanitation](#)

[Sanitation log](#)

[Refrigerator log 1](#)

[Refrigerator log 2](#)

[Food Safety Posters](#)

Comments: Our school lunches are prepared for us through [CKC](#) Good Food. [They](#) are compliant with the USDA Guidelines.

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?

From the time a student enrolls in Trinity First until they graduate, they are hearing about Jesus and given opportunities to worship and witness throughout every school day. While they encounter all that Trinity First has to offer, instilling a relationship with Jesus is front and center.

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.

We will continue to expand to have all volunteers complete the Ministry Safe Training.

D. What is the school's average rating for all General Indicators of Success for Standard 6, rounded to the nearest tenth?

STANDARD	RATING
6:02	3
6:03	3
6:04	3
6:05	3
Total:	12
Average: (Total ÷ 4)	3

STANDARD 7: FACILITIES

Buildings, grounds and equipment provide a safe and healthy environment that serves to enhance student learning.

Overview

The Lutheran school's physical facilities include the buildings, land, equipment, maintenance of the property and provisions for health, safety and sanitation. As a place for learning, the facilities help children grow spiritually, physically, mentally, socially and emotionally. School facilities demonstrate principles of harmony, order and utility. Its furnishings and décor are reflective of the Christian mission and purpose of the school.

Potential Evidence

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

- Job descriptions for maintenance and cleaning staff, including reporting responsibilities and lines of accountability
- Long-range plan for facility improvements, additions or expansion
- Budget line items committing financial support of ongoing maintenance and immediate facility improvements
- Inventory of instructional hardware and equipment, including technology infrastructure
- Certificates of compliance related to health and safety practices
- Cleaning schedules and custodial duties
- School lockdown plan

Potential Practices

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

- Buildings and grounds reflect the institution’s commitment to maintaining a safe and productive learning environment for students
- Regular and routine inspections (e.g. fire marshal, health inspector, lunch room audit, emergency light log, facility walkthrough, elevator, fire extinguishers, etc.)
- Regularly scheduled maintenance
- Daily cleaning and sanitizing
- Safety inspections as required by local agencies
- Annual review of emergency management procedures and response
- Custodial care and/or Cleaning Service
- Service of students with specialized learning needs

Required Responses

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

1. Describe the property (building and grounds).

Trinity First Lutheran School is situated on 1.44 acres (62,805 ft²) in Minneapolis, MN. The church and school are located in the Ventura Village neighborhood, a part of the Phillips Neighborhood, of South Minneapolis. The neighborhood is dynamic (rapidly changing) and extraordinarily diverse. Within walking distance of the school building are large populations of Native Americans, Latinos, and African refugee families; these populations are aptly represented in our school demographic. Economically, the area is low-income which is also highly representative of our school demographic. The current church building was constructed in 1959, and the current school building was added in 1972 including below-ground space and the church sanctuary, the school consists of 27,756 square feet of space.

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

AllSource, Inc. provides regular daily custodial service to both the church and school. In addition to regular, ordinary cleaning of school facilities. Additional physical maintenance is provided as-needed by both "regular" volunteers and special volunteers.

3. Describe how the school ensures that it complies with laws, health and safety requirements and building codes and American with Disabilities Act (ADA).

All required health and safety elements are inspected by the appropriate state, county, or municipal authority on a required and/or as needed basis. This includes, but is not limited to, the boiler and heating systems, fire alarm, fire suppression (sprinkler) system, and elevator. Pertinent certificates of completed inspection are attached, and are on file in a binder in the office.

Staff members maintain certificates for 1st Aid/CPR and are kept with our School Community Support Coordinator and Preschool Director, Carrie Butcher. A health school nurse from Special District 1 works with our staff member who has a degree in family health.

Our food program coordinator, Andrea Olson, works with the City of Minneapolis to ensure that our facilities are up-to-date on codes for our kitchen and serving areas. She also works closely with the State of Minnesota to ensure that our facilities are within health and safety guidelines for serving food.

While working with Langer Construction on updating our facilities, we installed two ADA compliant restrooms that allow for wheelchair access and wheelchair-bound people to utilize the restroom and have space for their wheelchair and/or aide to be in the room with them. We also have two ADA compliant entrances to the building. Our north entrance has a built-in ramp for wheelchair accessibility. It has a 1:12 slope which is acceptable according to MN ADA regulations for ramps that are not regularly occupied.

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

The facility is cleaned according to a regular schedule. This [cleaning schedule](#) includes a description of what is cleaned and when. We have a [maintenance contract](#) with Alliance Mechanical, who does routine maintenance on everything related to the building's heating and cooling. We have a [contract](#) with Masters Groundworks for snow removal in our parking lot and sidewalks during the winter months.

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

Sarah Wippich, School Principal, and Theresa Farrand, Administrative Assistant, maintain direct interaction with the manager of the company that cleans our school (AllSource, Inc.). We are able to quickly and effectively communicate needs with the company through this manner. This helps to ensure that we are able to maintain a clean and safe environment for our students and staff on a daily basis.

6. What part of the physical plant and property has been changed in the past three years?

- Chapel roof (scheduled for spring 2024)
- Parking lot (scheduled for 2024)
- Digital Sign (scheduled for early 2024)
- New dishwasher in kitchen (scheduled for 2024)
- Gym floor
- Sound panels
- Bathrooms in Kindergarten hallway
- Two offices added in the northwest part of the building
- LED lighting throughout school
- Boilers – tune-up, burners cleaned, pump settings updated
- Air handler/HVAC system update to digital system from pneumatic; all three phases of the air handler/HVAC system have been completed
- Water fountains replaced, water bottle fillers added
- New carpet in chapel
- New chairs in chapel
- Bookcases in chapel
- New storefront doors/windows in narthex
- Updated lighting in chapel
- Leveling of floor and carpet in balcony
- New sound and streaming system in chapel
- Mural added to main stairwell
- Mural added to Kindergarten Hallway
- New vestibule doors
- Network-based School Entry
- Card Entry off of playground into preschool area
- Hand sink in gym hallway
- New utility sink in boiler room
- Electrical outlets added to narthex
- Overhang over church casket doors replaced

- Awning over 13th Street entrance door

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

Plans for a new 10,300 square foot addition on top of our current school building are in the early, exploratory stages. Plans for the school building have been drawn up and revised. Initial fund-raising efforts and one-on-one meetings with prospective major donors are currently underway. When initial funding is secured construction can begin. In the church and school's current economic climate, it is not feasible to take out a construction loan despite the urgent perceived need for additional space and upgraded facilities. For this reason, construction will not proceed until the project is fully funded.

[Building Expansion Plans](#)

8. How are students protected from external threats on campus before, during and after school?

All entrances into the school are locked 24 hours per day, 7 days a week. There are two entrances mainly utilized by visitors, students, and parents. Both of these entrances are monitored by a staff member at all times and there is a camera facing both entrances; the data is recorded to a cloud-based server and that data is retained for 30 days. There are also a myriad of other cameras that cover both inside and outside of the school to ensure that our students are safe while within the school; these cameras also save to the cloud for 30 days.

Students arrive for school between 8:10 AM and 8:30 AM; entering from our North, South, and East doors that are manned by a staff member to ensure students get safely into the building. At 8:30 AM, the South and East doors are closed and secured, redirecting all students to the North door where they will be let into the locked door by a staff member through our access system; all other entrances/exits are used in case of emergency only. The school day concludes with a "closing" during which students are gathered together in the sanctuary for a brief time of worship music and prayer. Parents are invited to attend and actively participate in closing. To ensure the safety of our students and staff, any parents that are coming into the building for closing will be let into the school by a staff member that is in the office checking the camera. For the safety of students and staff, parents must either be in the sanctuary or wait outside the school building -- parents are not permitted to loiter in the building or school hallways during closing.

A safety audit conducted by the School Safety Council of Minnesota (HSEM) in October 2018 found no major concerns with building safety. The safety audit team was impressed with the high visibility afforded by Trinity First's camera system and with the windows that allow staff in the school office to visually identify all visitors at either main entrance. Another safety audit is planned to be conducted during the 2024-2025 school year by Dr. Julian Petzold of Lion Safety Consulting (lionsafetyconsulting.com).

All non-volunteer visitors are checked into the office to verify their identity and the reason they are at the school. All visitors sign in and out in a booklet by the main office and wear a visitor lanyard during their time in the building.

We ensure our parents, students, and teachers know to only admit those into the building that they know and to not hold the door open for anyone to be sure that we are able to control and verify the people that are in our building.

9. Describe how the school property is used by the community and outside groups and any procedures/policies that govern the use.

Currently, we do not allow outside or community groups to use our building on a long-term basis. However, we do allow use of our parking lot to community groups as long as they can provide proof of insurance in case of damage. We allow our neighbor, [Marie Sandvik Center](#), to use our parking lot for overflow parking for special events and at times, we have allowed them to use our gym for their summer programming when they have an unexpected need. We also rent 7 parking spaces to a community group ([PPL](#)) and have a [rental agreement](#). We also allow our neighbor, [Community Emergency Services](#), to park their vehicles on our property without fees.

10. Describe athletic facilities and training facilities and proper monitoring, sanitation, and safety procedures in place.

Our gymnasium and playground are both used in athletic functions. During the school day, all student use of these areas must include adequate teacher or staff supervision and monitoring. The gymnasium is cleaned in accordance with our school cleaning agreement with AllSource, Inc. Staff are trained in CPR and an AED is available by our school's south entrance.

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](#)

[School Crisis Management Plan \(including evacuation and reunification plans\)](#)

Required Indicators of Success

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

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

YES

NO

Identify and list supporting Evidence or Practices:

[CPR Certificate \(example\)](#)

[Cleaning schedules and custodial duties](#)

[Mechanical Contract](#)

[Snow Removal Contract](#)

[School Crisis and Management Plan](#)

[South Entrance Camera](#)

[Playground Camera](#)

[North Entrance Camera](#)

[Northeast-facing Camera](#)

[Outdoor lighting on all night long](#)

[Full parking lot with arrows](#)

[Green Privacy Fence Screen](#)

[South parking lot camera](#)

[AED located near south entrance](#)

Comments:

While not the prettiest school building, we work hard to be good stewards of what God has given us. We have worked hard to make sure the building is safe and secure for our students and families.

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

YES

NO

Identify and list supporting Evidence or Practices:

- [Sprinkler system inspection](#)
- [Boiler Inspection](#)
- [Commercial Fire License](#)
- [Elevator inspection](#)
- [Fire Alarm inspection](#)
- [Fire extinguishers maintenance](#)
- [Pollution Control Certificate](#)
- [Dates of fire/tornado/safety drills](#)
- [Food & Beverage Inspection](#)
- [Nutrition Program Visit Report](#)
- [Nutrition Program Approval Notice](#)
- [Food Service License](#)

Comments:

All of these documents are kept in a binder in the office.

General Indicators of Success

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

See Page 8 for Scoring Rubric.

7:03 - Buildings, grounds and equipment are well maintained, clean and appropriate for the age and number of students.

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

- The size and design of the buildings and teaching/learning areas are appropriate for the school’s programs and achievement of learner outcomes (objectives), meet state and local code requirements and provide for special needs.
- All teaching/learning areas are properly ventilated, lighted and have adequate space for the number and size of the students.
- The buildings are cleaned daily and the restrooms are sanitary.
- School furniture is sufficient in quantity and age appropriate.
- The school administrator(s) participates in the supervision of those who maintain the physical facilities.
- Adequate provisions exist for offices, area for students needing care, recreation, library/media center and space for small-group instruction.
- The school facility has appropriate technology infrastructure.

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

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

Identify and list supporting Evidence or Practices:

Trinity First has two play structures for different age groups: one for the [younger grades](#) and one for the [older grades](#). This is to ensure that we have a myriad of different toys available for the students to use while on the playground that are age appropriate.

The school utilizes 11 classrooms. The library and sanctuary are used for Boys Club, Religion, Music classes, meeting room, and small group tutoring, including chapel and library. The former cafeteria has been made into a classroom to accommodate the school's needs. Our students are using the gym as a cafeteria in order to utilize our space as efficiently as possible while still ensuring our students have a viable space to use when they are unable to go outside.

- [Treehouse 1 \(Special Education\)](#)
- [Treehouse 2 \(Special Education\)](#)
- [Title 1 room](#)
- [7th 8th photo](#)
- [6th grade](#)
- [5th grade](#)
- [3rd 4th grade](#)
- [2nd grade](#)
- [1st grade](#)
- [K5 grade](#)
- [K3/K4 Gold Room](#)
- [K3/K4 Blue Room](#)
- [Girls club \(small group\)](#)
- [Boys club \(small group\)](#)
- [Choir Lesson in sanctuary](#)
- [Bible \(Religion\) lesson in sanctuary](#)
- [Garden photo](#)
- [Public and Private Wifi networks throughout the building](#)
 - Both TFLS-Staff and TFLS-Student networks are hidden networks
- [Small Group tutoring photos](#)
- [ADA Compliant Bathroom](#)
- [Ramp to front entrance](#)
- [Student using iPad in learning](#)
- [Student learning to use soundboard in chapel](#)
- [Student using Promethean board](#)
- [School Network Panel with Backup Battery and Firewall](#)

Comments:

Trinity First is incredibly efficient in its use of the limited space available in order to provide the best possible learning experience for our students and to allow for ample space for recreation. All classrooms have Promethean boards. Every student has either an iPad or Chromebook that can be used for further learning or during an Online Learning Day (if the teacher allows).

7:04 - Physical facilities provide specific (crosses, signs, etc.) and non-specific (attractive, adequate, etc.) Lutheran Christian witness to the community.

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

- The buildings contain evidence that the school is a Lutheran Christian school.

- Christian banners, pictures and posters are displayed in the hallway, entryway, gymnasium and classrooms.

- A cross is hung in a prominent place.

- An outdoor sign provides evidence of a Lutheran Christian School to the community.

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

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

Identify and list supporting Evidence or Practices:

- [Outdoor sign by entrance](#)
- [Outdoor sign on playground fence](#)
- [Outdoor sign image 3 faces Franklin Ave](#)
- [Outdoor changeable sign faces 11th St.](#)
- [Cross photo](#)
- Various photos of [Christian symbols](#) throughout the building
- [Flags near entrance](#)

Comments:

We have many and various works of art that promote our Christian faith.

7:05 - The building and grounds provide a safe school environment.

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

- Policies and procedures are in place to maintain a safe school environment.
- The playground, athletic field(s), and school grounds are properly supervised, safe and fenced when appropriate and needed.
- The school limits access to the facility, has locked entrances and is secure during normal school hours.
- Crossing guards, lanes and school speed zones are provided when and where needed.
- A safe, carefully supervised procedure for loading and unloading students in cars, buses and other vehicles is in effect.

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

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

Identify and list supporting Evidence or Practices:

- [No Parking signs at bus loading area](#)
- [Crossing guard](#)
- [Bus loading](#)
- [Parent handbook pages 10-12, 24](#)
- [Staff handbook page 11, 25](#)
- [Volunteer orientation](#)
- [Playground Usage Sign](#)
- Fences provide safety from vehicular traffic during school hours
 - [Example 1](#)
 - [Example 2](#)
- [Parking lot arrows keep students safe during drop off and control flow of traffic](#)
- [School doors locked with fob access and intercom](#)
- [Safety vestibule north](#)
- [Teacher supervising gym activities](#)

Comments: Both north and south entrances have a second locked door, creating a safety vestibule.

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?

Having the school doors locked and every visitor vetted before entry along with the camera system creates a safe learning environment.

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 amount of space for classrooms continues to limit our ministry. We have had to turn away families because classrooms were full. Some of the classrooms in the building, while functional, are not ideal.

D. What is the school's average rating for all General Indicators of Success for Standard 7, rounded to the nearest tenth?

STANDARD	RATING
7:03	3
7:04	3
7:05	3
Total:	9
Average: (Total ÷ 3)	3

IDENTIFICATION OF POWERFUL PRACTICES

Identify and provide an explanation of any practices (please limit to no more than three) that may be *Powerful Practices*. It should be noted that schools may meet all accreditation standards without identifying any *Powerful Practices*.

NLSA seeks to identify and share powerful practices that make it a highly respected educational institution in its community. *Powerful Practices* are carefully researched, collaboratively established and dynamically affect student learning and/or ministry opportunities in a Lutheran school. These are the practices that have the potential for replication in other Lutheran schools.

A school's *Powerful Practice* is much more than an expectation that quantifies Standard compliance. It innovates and exceeds accreditation expectations. It is a calculated risk that results in significant reward for students. Therefore, it is a desirable condition that has ramifications for schools throughout the LCMS.

Identify any potential Powerful Practices in the space below:

PRELIMINARY SCHOOL ACTION PLAN

A preliminary School Action Plan is developed as the concluding process of the school’s Self-Study. The plan must address every area of concern (“emerging” [2] and “not evident” [1]). Each concern must be noted and addressed. “Operational” [3] indicators may also be addressed in the preliminary School Action Plan. The preliminary School Action Plan must be attached to the Self-Study document.

NLSA Preliminary School Action Plan												
School Name:												
School Address:												
LCMS District:												
Administrator:												
Date of Most Recent NLSA Validation Team Visit:												
Accreditation Year		Preliminary		Year 1		Year 2		Year 3		Year 4		Year 5
Standard & Indicator Number	Self-Study Concerns & Strategies				Target School Year	Responsible Party	Action Taken	School Year Addressed				

SCHOOL ACTION PLAN

NOTE: DO NOT Complete Prior to Validation Team Visit

The School Action Plan is developed from the Preliminary School Action Plan originally submitted with the school’s Self-Study and updated with the input from the Validation Team. The plan must address every area of concern (“emerging” [2] and “not evident” [1]). Each concern must be noted and addressed. “Operational” [3] indicators may also be addressed in the School Action Plan. This Plan will guide the school through the next five years in a process of continuous improvement prior to the next Self-Study process and Validation Team visit.

The completed NLSA Final School Action Plan must be included along with a separate copy of the NLSA Preliminary School Action Plan and the school’s Strategic Plan in the final submission of the school’s Self-Study to the District Accreditation Commission.

NLSA Final School Action Plan												
School Name:												
School Address:												
LCMS District:												
Administrator:												
Date of Most Recent NLSA Validation Team Visit:												
Accreditation Year	<input type="text"/>	Initial	<input type="text"/>	Year 1	<input type="text"/>	Year 2	<input type="text"/>	Year 3	<input type="text"/>	Year 4	<input type="text"/>	Year 5
Standard & Indicator Number	Self-Study Concerns & Strategies				Target School Year	Responsible Party	Action Taken	School Year Addressed				