



**Visiting Team Report for
Ongoing Improvement Process
OF
Trinity Lutheran School**



April 28th-29th, 2014

501 N Main St.

Janesville, MN 56048

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FOREWORD

Becoming accredited is a strenuous process. Trinity Lutheran School and its administration are to be highly commended for their efforts in this accreditation process. The self-study document and the various arrangements for the accreditation team were done very well. It is the hope and prayer of the members of the visiting team that the enclosed document is one that is accurate and helpful for the continued improvement of Trinity Lutheran School.

The committee hereby expresses sincere gratitude to the faculty, staff, and students at Trinity Lutheran School for the opportunity to serve on the visiting team and for the many kindnesses shown to us during our visit. Each of us on the committee has grown as a result of the experience.

Trinity Lutheran School obviously is a good school. This was reflected not only in your self-study but also in the comments and observations of the visiting team. We were delighted with the whole climate of Trinity. The school speaks out for the Christian faith to the students and to the community very effectively.

This report is carefully written and includes specific recommendations that should be considered seriously by the school and the supporting congregations. Not every suggestion needs to be followed, but each should be considered.

The three members of the visiting team worked together as one team, but each member assumed the responsibility to examine in-depth several standards. This report combines the talent of all members of the team and of the committees. The report has been written and edited by the team as a whole, with only minor editing done by the team captain.

The team captain, the consultant, and the team member pledge their continued support and assistance should you care to call upon us in the implementation process.

May the Lord richly bless the faculty and constituents of Trinity Lutheran School so that with the Lord's help you might continue to proclaim His Gospel ever more effectively through Trinity Lutheran School.

Corey Nelson

Team Captain

Limitations on the Distribution, Use, and Scope of this Document

It is the official intent of the National Lutheran School Accreditation Commission that this report be considered a privileged document, to be submitted by the captain of the visiting team directly to the administration of the school. The distribution of the report and its availability for public consideration beyond that point rests solely in the hands of the school administration. Neither the captain nor the members of the visiting team are authorized to release any of the information contained in this report without the approval of the administration of the school.

The primary purpose of the visiting team has been to examine the educational ministry of the school, including courses of study, learning materials, student needs and interests, staffing, and facilities. The visiting team has attempted to assess the effectiveness of the total school program in meeting the educational objectives the school has established for itself and in meeting national NLSA standards.

It has not been the purpose of the visiting team to evaluate individual teacher performance. The use of this report as an official assessment of any staff person's professional competency would be in violation of the process and the intent under which the school evaluation was conducted. Such use would be inherently invalid since at no time during the team visit has the team been concerned with the evaluation of individual teacher performance.

Accreditation is a process that centers around the self-study conducted by the individual school. The visiting team and its subsequent report are meant to assist the school in its own process as a guideline for continual growth. Neither the team nor its report can be presumed to be the authority for validating any claims regarding health, safety, or personnel issues. Such matters are the sole responsibility of the school.

VISITING TEAM BIOGRAPHIES

Captain: Corey Nelson

Teacher, Rochester Central Lutheran School
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Education: BS, Concordia-Seward; MS Saginaw Valley State University, Saginaw, MI

Areas Examined: Mission/Vision, Personnel, Curriculum

Accreditation Experience: Teacher at RCLS for two accreditation cycles
Served as captain or member on 3 teams

Consultant: Joel Witt

Principal, Faribault Lutheran School
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Education: BS, Concordia-Seward; MS, Concordia - Seward

Areas Examined: Leadership, Health and Safety, Finance, Evaluation

Accreditation Experience: Principal at two schools, accredited.

Served as captain of three accreditation teams.

Served as consultant for one accreditation team.

Team Member: Emily Anderson

Principal and Teacher, Immanuel Lutheran School - Silo
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Education: BS, Bethany Lutheran College; Mankato, MN; Colloquy Completed March 2009; SLED Graduate 2013

Areas Examined: Relationships, Instruction, Student Services, Facilities

Accreditation Experience: This is my first experience with accreditation.

Accreditation Recommendation

On the basis of our review of the School Profile, the NLSA Standards Checklist, the narrative statements, and the School Improvement Plan for Trinity Lutheran School, we recommend NLSA accreditation.

Name of Team Captain: Corey Nelson

Handwritten signature of Corey Nelson in blue ink.

Signature of Captain

Date: April 29th, 2014

Handwritten signature of Joel Will in blue ink.

Joel Will, Consultant

Handwritten signature of Emily Anderson in blue ink.

Emily Anderson, Team Member

Team Checklist

1 YES The school has successfully completed NLSA Phase I.

2 YES The school has successfully completed the Standards Checklist.

3 YES The exhibits are appropriate and complete.

4 YES The school indicated satisfactory compliance with the NLSA Standards.

5 YES The narrative summary statement for each section indicates valid reasons for incomplete compliance or non-compliance.

6 YES The needs assessment adequately identifies school and student needs.

7 YES The School Improvement Plan states valid, student-centered goals for improving the school's program based on identified needs and NLSA standards.

8 YES The School Improvement Plan provides for an adequate process for addressing the identified goals, including objectives and strategies to be used, a time frame, and methods for evaluation.

Standards Evaluations for Trinity Lutheran School

Standard 1: Mission and Vision

- 1.06 - The mission statement of Trinity should be easily visible within the school. **It is the recommendation of the Visiting Team to post the mission statement in hallways, near entrances, and within each classroom.**
- 1.08 - **It is the recommendation of the Visiting Team that a representative group of stakeholders participate in the annual evaluation of the school's core values, mission, and vision.**

Standard 2: Relationships

- 2.08 - **It is the recommendation of the Visiting Team that a rotation cycle is developed to involve the teachers in leading weekly devotions.**
- 2.09 - **It is the recommendation of the Visiting Team that an Evangelism Plan is established in written form that, as a procedure, effectively ministers to school families, especially those who are unchurched or not actively participating in congregational activities.**
- 2.11 - **It is the recommendation of the Visiting Team that public relations efforts are increased and evaluated for effectiveness.**
- 2.12 - **It is the recommendation of the Visiting Team that volunteer opportunities are communicated to families and the congregation (such as through the school newsletter) after an evaluation of areas of need has been completed.**
- 2.15 - **It is the recommendation of the Visiting Team that Trinity Lutheran Church and School begins designing and implementing a parent education program.**
- 2.29 - **It is the recommendation of the Visiting Team that students are encouraged to actively participate in chapel leadership roles.**
- 2.31 - **It is the recommendation of the Visiting Team that the faculty be given opportunities to share professionally such as in a PLC.**
- 2.31 - **It is the recommendation of the Visiting Team that the administration explores opportunities for professional growth and development in collaboration with the JWP school district staff.**

Standard 3: Leadership

- 3A:09 - The Board of Christian Education policies have not been collected into a policy manual separate from the minutes. **It is the recommendation of the Visiting Team that the policies be gathered in a policy manual for annual review.**

- **3A:13 - It is the recommendation of the Visiting Team that the BCE conducts an annual formal evaluation of the administrator.**
- **3A: 15 - It is the recommendation of the Visiting Team that the BCE establishes long-range goals and desired outcomes and communicates them to the congregation and other stakeholders.**
- **3B: 35 - It is the recommendation of the Visiting Team that the administration conduct a regular schedule of formal and informal evaluations of faculty members.**
- **3B: 38 - While the Visiting Team agrees that this standard is met in full, it is our recommendation that the Faculty/Staff Handbook be edited to contain no duplicate information found in the Parent/Student Handbook.**

Standard 4: Personnel

- **4.03 - It is the recommendation of the Visiting Team that all full-time faculty members have a current Minnesota teaching license.**

Standard 5: Curriculum

- **5.05 - It is the recommendation of the Visiting Team that the written curriculum objectives align with Minnesota state standards or national standards (where applicable).**

Standard 6: Instruction

- **6.02 - It is the recommendation of the Visiting Team that the administrator implement a procedure for the faculty to monitor and report teaching objective coverage.**
- **6.05 - It is the recommendation of the Visiting Team that written 504 plans be developed and implemented for any students receiving accommodations in the classrooms.**
- **6.14 - It is the recommendation of the Visiting Team that a plan be developed for adding a balanced selection of materials to the school library.**

Standard 7: Student Services

- **7C:13 - It is the recommendation of the Visiting Team that concussion training be required for all teachers and athletic supervisors.**

Standard 8: Health and Safety

- **It is the recommendation of the Visiting Team that a uniform format be established for fire evacuation and tornado safe zone displays in classrooms.**

Standard 11: Evaluation

- **11.05 - It is the recommendation of the Visiting Team that the standards/objectives for each subject area are reviewed prior to the review and selection of textbooks.**

Goals Evaluation for Trinity

Goal 1: Technology is fully integrated into the learning environment of Trinity Lutheran School.

Technology is a vital part of remaining at the forefront of education. The establishment of a technology plan (GIS 6:16) includes beginning steps to move in a bold direction in regards to technology. The Visiting Team approves this goal.

Goal 2: Trinity Lutheran School will improve the coordination of volunteer service and establish a formal training process and guidelines for regular volunteers.

The Visiting Team recognizes that the family-focused ministry of Trinity Lutheran School stands as one of its greatest strengths. Volunteers in this ministry add value, strength, and versatility as well as the opportunity for individualized education for the students. The Visiting Team supports this goal.

Strengths at Trinity

1. Trinity Lutheran Church demonstrates exceptional support of Trinity Lutheran School.
2. Trinity Lutheran Church prioritizes the school by providing tuition support for all students.
3. Trinity Lutheran School is served by a dedicated, experienced, and professional faculty.
4. Trinity Lutheran School has a thriving educational ministry.
5. Trinity Lutheran School is a family-like community where parents, students, and faculty members feel safe and comfortable.
6. The faculty demonstrates support for each other that appears to be almost instinctual.

General Concerns for Trinity

1. The mission statement of Trinity should be easily visible within the school.
2. The Board of Christian Education policies have not been collected into a policy manual separate from the minutes.
3. There appears to be no written long-range goals for the school.
4. Not all teachers have a current Minnesota teaching license.
5. Currently there is no system of accountability for covering classroom curricular objectives.
6. There is no format in use for establishing 504 plans for students receiving accommodations.

Suggestions for Trinity to Consider

1. The Trinity Lutheran School faculty should be given opportunities to share professionally such as in a PLC.
2. The administration should pursue and continue conversations with the JWP music staff about providing band instruction at convenient times.
3. The faculty should explore direct professional development in the area of technology.
4. Continue to strive toward excellence in instruction, relationships, and professional development.