

# The Consultant's Manual

National Lutheran School Accreditation



# Mission Statement

National Lutheran School Accreditation encourages, assists, and recognizes schools that provide quality Christian education and engage in continuous improvement.

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## 1. Introduction to the Role of a Consultant

You have been selected to provide assistance to a school working through the process of National Lutheran School Accreditation. As the school's assigned consultant, you play a critical role in its accreditation process. Your primary task is to help the school improve. To accomplish that task, you are to help the applicant school successfully complete its self-study process and prepare for a visit of a team of outside educators representing NLSA. This helping process involves a variety of skills. From the time of application, the consultant must inform, assist, direct, encourage, and oversee the applicant school.

The NLSA Director, in consultation with the District Education Executive, has appointed you to this important responsibility. You have been selected on the basis of your previous NLSA experience, communication skills, and leadership ability. Being selected as a consultant is a responsibility that comes with great honor and holds great responsibilities.

Your mission as a consultant is to inform, encourage and assist school leadership so the accreditation process will be successful. Your primary role is that of an advocate. You speak for NLSA to make sure that the school, with good integrity, completes the appropriate process. Your role is also to advocate the school's readiness for a site visit and accreditation to the team captain when that time comes. Thus it is important that you become well acquainted with the school personnel so that you might communicate effectively with them and communicate accurately on their behalf.

Perhaps your greatest concern for their process is "acceptability." As the school steering committee and subcommittees conduct their work and prepare their reports, they typically ask, "Is this acceptable?" As you review materials prepared by the school, look through the eyes of the visiting team, who is the primary audience for the self-study report. You will advise the school whether or not what they have planned, what they are doing, and what they have accomplished is and will be acceptable to those visiting team members, so that they can recommend that the school be accredited by NLSA. A school should not be visited if success is not expected. Thus, it is vital that the consultant alert the school to potential problems and ensure that the school will be ready for not only consideration, but especially successful completion of the accreditation process. It is far better for the school to delay or stop the process than to put all the effort, resources, and emotions into the process only to result in failure. If the school is not accredited, the consultant has not accomplished his or her job effectively.

NLSA has its most dynamic effect on schools that use the process to affect changes that result in school improvement. The process does not end with the team visit and awarding of the certificate. Plans that result from an NLSA process (the school action plan) become the blueprint for changes in the school that help make it become a School of Choice in its community. An effective NLSA consultant helps the school understand and accept the challenges associated with an ongoing process.

I commend you for sharing your skills and experience with a school seeking accreditation through NLSA. Ultimately you are making an impact for eternity in your service to the school. May God bless you as you complete this important ministry of helping a school succeed through the National Lutheran School Accreditation process.

Terry Schmidt, Director  
*National Lutheran School Accreditation*

## 2. Evaluating the School's Purpose

Any organization that excels is guided by a mission statement that closely aligns with clearly defined and well understood purpose. Organizational leaders have the responsibility of articulating their school's purpose so that every stakeholder understands his or her individual responsibilities in regard to its accomplishment. When the purpose, vision and values of a school most assuredly be living its purpose.

A consultant is a critical stakeholder in the NLSA process. The consultant's roles and responsibilities are directly aligned with the first three purposes of NLSA. Consultants are committed to

1. Helping their assigned school improve.
2. Helping the school conduct a thorough and objective self-study process based on the school's unique purpose and national standards.
3. Assuring that the schools information is accurate and truthful in preparation for the team visit.

Within their role of assuring the success of the assigned school with its self-study process, the consultant plays an essential role within our organization. The success of NLSA is directly aligned with the efficiency and effectiveness of the work of every consultant. Therefore it is critical that the consultant understand the mission, purpose and values of NLSA and internalize them within their work with schools.

### NLSA Mission

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

### NLSA Purpose

- Help Lutheran schools improve.
- Help Lutheran schools evaluate themselves based upon their unique purpose and on national standards.
- Assure a standard of quality for accredited Lutheran schools.
- Provide appropriate recognition to those schools successfully completing the process.

### NLSA Core Values

- Christian culture in every Lutheran school.
- Educational excellence.
- Innovation that results in improved
- Ongoing Improvement

### 3. The Role of the Consultant

#### **Mission:**

Inform, encourage and assist school leaders so the accreditation process will be successful.

#### **Role:**

Advocate: Serves as the NLSA representative to the school. Represents the school to the team captain and district accreditation officials.

#### **Focus:**

Process: Assist the school so that it may successfully complete its self-study process.

#### **Key Concern:**

Acceptability: Determine if the school's materials and documentation will be acceptable to the visiting team and fulfills requirements for accredited schools.

### The Consultant's Job Description

#### **A. Qualifications:**

Unless the district requests an exception, the NLSA Director will appoint as consultant only a person who:

1. Has been trained to be an NLSA consultant.
2. Is currently serving as or has recently retired as a teacher or administrator in a Lutheran (LCMS) school (childcare, early childhood, elementary, middle or secondary)
3. Has successfully led a Lutheran school through an NLSA process.
4. Is committed to the success of the assigned schools.

#### **B. Selection**

1. The school may request a specific consultant but the consultant is recommended by the district education executive on the school's NLSA application form. On the basis of that recommendation, the consultant is appointed by the NLSA director when the school's application is processed by the NLSA office.
2. It is expected that the consultant should have experience at the same level (early childhood, elementary, high school) as the school to be consulted.
3. The prospective consultant is contacted by the district before the appointment to determine willingness to serve. A copy of the letter informing the applying school of their appointed consultant is sent to the consultant.

## C. Responsibilities

1. The role of the consultant is to assure the success of the school in its NLSA self-study process.
2. Telephone the school administrator immediately upon being informed of appointment as consultant, to become acquainted and to offer assistance.
3. Telephone the school at least once every two months during the school's self-study process.
4. Visit the school at least once, preferably twice, at the school's expense, during the first four months of the self-study process. During the visit the consultant should:
  - a. Meet with the school administrator.
  - b. Meet with the faculty and the pastor.
  - c. Meet with the NLSA Steering Committee.
  - d. Observe the school in action for several hours.
  - e. Review the tentative timeline for the process, with deadline dates, working backward the tentative date of the site visit listed on the application form.
  - f. Review how rating indicators are assigned based upon a preponderance of evidence and practices.
  - g. Review and react to all preliminary versions of the self-study document.
  - h. Answer specific questions, make suggestions and encourage the school's progress.
  - i. Maintain contact with the district accreditation officials reporting school progress.
  - j. Help the team recommend a qualified visiting team captain. The selection of the team captain must be supported by district accreditation officials and approved by the NLSA Director.
  - k. Consult with the school administrator about other members of the visiting team.
  - l. Remind the school to request that their suggested team members are appointed by the NLSA director. This can be accomplished using e-mail.
  - m. Determine that the school complies with accreditation requirements related to documentation and indicators.
  - n. Determine that the school's report indicators reflect actual practice at the school.
  - o. Notify district accreditation officials that the school is ready to host a site visit. Reschedule the visit if the school is not prepared or the outcome of the visit is uncertain.
  - p. Remind the school of its responsibilities to forward copies of the self-study report to the NLSA office as soon as it is completed.

## 4. Characteristics of an Effective Consultant

An effective consultant is:

1. **Positive:** The consultant should reflect a positive outlook and an optimistic view of the future. The focus should be on what can be done and what is possible, rather than on negatives or obstacles.
2. **Humble:** A humble spirit must be evident; arrogance or a condescending nature negates the effectiveness of an NLSA consultant.
3. **A Leader:** An effective consultant provides leadership without being the decision-maker.

4. **A Model:** Model what you advise. If you advise the school to be accurate in written materials, be sure the written materials you produce are flawless. The credibility of the consultant's recommendations are enhanced by demonstrating what is recommended.
5. **A Good Listener:** Listening is necessary to ensure that accurate and complete information is received. School leaders will often be more receptive to advice when they are sure that the consultant has listened to and understood their information and concerns.
6. **A Catalyst:** Effective consultations result in school improvement. The successful consultant will maximize involvement, validate decisions and serve to initiate people's assistance in support and completion of plans for improvement.
7. **A Planner:** Skills are necessary to help schools develop plans that will have a dynamic impact on school improvement and student learning.
8. **Future-Oriented:** The consultant's view should always direct the school toward the future. Although a study of the past and present is an essential element of a self-study or needs assessment process, the consultant's focus should always be, "Where do we go from here?", "What goals should be established?" and "What plans are essential to our success?"
9. **Time-Oriented:** The accreditation school improvement process must be planned so the school can become accredited within its chosen time frame. Since the National Accreditation Commission meets only once each year, the process must be planned so it is completed in time for the school to be ready to comply with district and national deadlines.
10. **Enthusiastic:** When appropriate, it is the consultant's task to bring an atmosphere of enthusiasm for the blessings received from the accreditation process, even when the events involved with the self-study become cumbersome. An effective consultant's leadership and enthusiasm will be contagious.
11. **Affirming:** The consultant affirms the ministry of each member of the school staff and the captain of the visiting team.
12. **Realistic:** The consultant provides a realistic assessment of the likelihood of success for the school. Assessment is based upon a thorough examination of written materials and documentation provided by the school.
13. **Prayer Warrior:** The consultant upholds the school, staff, children, families, congregation, pastor, and lay leaders in prayer.

## 5. NLSA Consultant Timeline and Checklist

The checklist of consultant duties is listed below as a sample timeline for a 12-month accreditation process. It provides approximate times for the completion of various parts of the process. Experienced NLSA consultants must remember that no two schools are exactly the same; schools may take two years or longer to complete the process. It is your responsibility to help the school determine how much time is necessary to assure success. Schools are allowed up to two years to complete the process. Most schools are able to conduct a process including self study and team visit in one year.

The steps below will guide your work as a consultant. They are intended to be completed sequentially. Some of them are simple tasks; others take several months and will require a great deal of effort. Some of the tasks overlap. Each one, however, should be completed by the consultant and checked off on this list when completed. It would be good if a copy of the completed checklist was

submitted to the visiting team captain so that both captain and consultant are aware of the efforts of the other. This checklist is not intended to be comprehensive.

### **Month 1**

- As soon as appointed, contact the school administrator in person or by telephone to offer your assistance.
- Review the Getting Ready for Accreditation checklist with the school administrator.
- Advise the school as to the formation of a steering committee and subcommittees
- Establish an orientation date for a visit with faculty, pastor(s) and school board the purpose and process of accreditation.

### **Month 2**

- Assist the school in establishing a tentative timeline with deadline dates, working backward from the tentative date of the visit that has been listed on the application form.
- Visit the school
- Consult with the administrator about organizing an accreditation process. Discuss accreditation requirements and how to establish indicator ratings based upon a preponderance of evidence and practices in place at the school.
- Advise the administrator that the school self study report should accurately reflect the practices in place at the school at the current time.
- Establish the process for sharing information between the school and the consultant.

### **Month 3-6**

- Advise the school that it is responsible to share drafts of all material with you as they are prepared. Monitor school progress monthly using telephone calls, e-mail or personal visits.
- Receive and review drafts of self study standard areas that are prepared by the school. Make recommendations. React to items shared within one week after receipt of the information. Share samples when appropriate.
- Advise and ensure that the self-study document accurately reflects conditions in place at the school.
- Consult with district accreditation officials regarding candidates for team captain.

### **Month 7**

- Report school progress to district accreditation officials.
- Consult and assist in the final collaborative selection process for a team captain.

### **Month 8**

- Ensure that the school's self study report is nearing completion and that standard area ratings are based upon evidence and practices and reflect practices currently in place at the school.
- Validate that a variety of school constituents have participated in the process.



- Begin a discussion related to securing members of the visiting team.

### Month 9 – 10

- Consult with the administrator about the selection of visiting team members. Ensure the recruitment and commitment of team members following established NLSA protocol.
- Remind the school accreditation leader that the self-study report must be distributed to all visiting team members no later than one month before the visit. Electronic submissions are acceptable.
- Alert the administrator to any concerns you have about the quality and process of the process. Access readiness for the site visit.

### Month 11

- Review the final copy of the school’s self-study report with narratives before it is distributed to team members. Ensure that requirements and rules related to the self study have been met.
- Inform the school of readiness for a site visit. Postpone the visit if success is uncertain.

### Month 12

- Remind the administrator to send copies of the self-study report to visiting team members, the district NLSA commission, and the NLSA national office. At the appropriate time, verify that copies were received.
- Announce the completion of your responsibilities to the school administrator and offer ongoing assistance as needed.

## 6. Consultant Do’s and Don’ts

DO	DON’T
Communicate verbally	Rely sole on verbal communication
Communicate in writing	Write only generalities
Know current NLSA materials and processes	Use outdated materials
Establish deadlines	Require rigid and uncompromising deadlines
Be open and honest	Say one thing and mean another
Become acquainted with the campus	Judge only on appearances
Become acquainted with school leadership	Rely on input from only one person
Respect the schools unique nature	Try to make the school like yours
Share examples from a variety of sources	Just tell them how you did it
Be their advocate	Be their taskmaster
Give “hard” advise when needed	Try to be liked at all costs
Respond promptly to questions and material	Be the reason for their delays
Assist the steering committee	Become identified with a committee minority
Assist the school improvement	Tell them specifically how to improve
Encourage school progress	Accept the unacceptable
Se specific in writing	Give detractors written ammunition

## 7. Consultant and Captain Roles Clarification

The school consultant and the visiting team captain play significant and distinctive roles in the school's pursuit of accreditation. Both play a part in evaluating the school's processes related to compliance with required standards and indicators of success and improvement for the benefit of students and families.

The roles of consultant and team captain must be complementary rather than competitive. Thus, each has a unique and distinctive responsibility to help the school: It is their primary motivation and expectation. The consultant helps the school achieve success with its self-study process. The captain helps the school by directing the activities of the visiting team.

In consultation with the district executive, the consultant helps select a team captain for the school. The team captain helps the school select its visiting team members. The consultant helps the school schedule the self-study, scheduling the date for the visiting team, and sets deadlines for various committees and various materials to be produced. The captain, on the other hand, helps schedule the visiting team meetings and must be consulted related to the dates of the team visit. The consultant's responsibility is to educate the faculty, the steering committee, the school board, and other constituents at the school in what NLSA is and how the NLSA process is to be conducted. The captain's responsibility is to educate the visiting team. Many members of the visiting team will not have any experience in accreditation (and specifically, National Lutheran School Accreditation) and need to be informed about the process. The consultant helps to determine whether or not the school is ready for a successful team visit. The team captain provides an unbiased evaluation of the school's accreditation status and determines whether or not the school is ready for a recommendation for accreditation to the district and national commissions.

The chart below illustrates differences in the relationship between these roles and responsibilities:

<b>CONSULTANT</b>	<b>TEAM CAPTAIN</b>
<b>HELPS SCHOOL THROUGH</b>	
<b>Self study process</b>	Site visit
<b>HELPS SELECT</b>	
<b>Team Captain</b>	Team members
<b>HELPS SCHEDULE</b>	
<b>Self-study process</b>	Visiting team work
<b>HELPS EDUCATE</b>	
<b>Faculty and constituents</b>	Visiting team members
<b>HELPS DETERMINE</b>	
<b>Readiness for the visit</b>	Accreditation qualifications

## 8. Sample Initial Consultant Visit

One of the earliest tasks of the school consultant is to schedule an orientation visit with the faculty and school board and follow through to make that visit. This can be accomplished in a half-day visit. The schedule below suggests approximate times for the visit along with potential ideas to communicate.

### Arrive 12:30 p.m.

- Walk through school (30 min.)
- Meet pastor and other church staff (15 min.)
- Meet with administrator (2 hours)
  - Costs
  - Organization—Committees
  - Review exhibits
  - Make sure materials are current
  - Review NLSA process and your role
  
- Meet with faculty briefly (15 min.)
  - Encourage, offer help, get acquainted, assure of benefits
  - Review process and their role
  
- Meet with board (30 min.)
  - Commend
  - Assure your help
  - Review benefits, process
  - Review your role and their role
  - Review costs and other plans made with administrator

## 9. Getting Started with School Purpose

Every accredited Lutheran school must be able to present a scriptural rationale for its existence, clearly state its purpose, and state the preferred future condition of its organization. Documents that define and support the school's purpose must be presented clearly and concisely and must not conflict with the mission statement of the sponsoring congregation or organization.

In evaluating the relevance of its purpose a school must determine how the stated purpose is reflected in the overall operation of the school, including administration, instruction, co-curricular activities, and learner outcomes. Clearly defined documentation and evidence provides additional support and direction for the accomplishment of the school's purpose. Since these concepts guide and direct all of the programs and activities in place at the school they must be well defined and clearly understood by everyone.

The consultant must encourage the school to begin its self-study with the evaluation of the school's purpose. The entire faculty, working together, should conduct a careful review of documentation and practices that support and reflect that purpose. This work with the Purpose Standard can be used to establish the tone of the entire self-study process.

## 10. Understanding Rating Assignments

### Process Requirements

NLSA has established requirements that are associated with each of the standard areas. **Required indicators of success** describe the practices that are essential for Lutheran schools seeking accreditation. In order to be accredited in good standing the school must answer these indicators “YES” with practices and evidence to support their answers. The visitation team will spend time verifying that the school complies with required indicators. The school’s assigned accreditation consultant is required to verify that required indicators of success are met before a school validation visit will be authorized.

**Required evidence and documentation** must be present and engaged in order for your school to be accredited in good standing. The school’s assigned accreditation consultant is charged to verify that required evidence and documentation is in place. Conducting a school accreditation visit without required items in place could result in the denial of an accreditation award. Therefore it is essential that all required evidence and documentation is well-prepared and reflects the actual condition in place at the school.

It is important that faculty, pastor, board members, parents, and students understand that the purpose of this process is to improve the quality of the school program through self-evaluation, introspection, and comprehensive examination of what is happening to children in the school environment and by comparing it to national standards for Lutheran schools. During the NLSA process, it may become obvious that some facets of the school need be changed. Those desirable changes that can be done quickly should be done as part of the process, not just delayed for future action. School improvement should be intentionally pursued, not just be discussed, as part of the NLSA process.

### Potential evidence and practices

Evidence and practices builds the case to help support how a school enacts general indicators of success. Potential evidence and practices provides a list of suggestions for a school to consider as it evaluates its compliance within each standard area. The more significant the evidence and practices, the higher the school can rate its accomplishments.

Evidence is what the school has (documents, policies, schedules, meeting minutes, written curriculum etc.).

Practices are what the school does (training, teaching methods, supervision, building inspections etc.)

Schools are not limited to considering only those items of evidence and practices that are listed. We recommend that schools identify and list items that are not presented on the list but are present and enacted at the school.

### Rating Rubrics

Compliance ratings for each general indicator are determined by subcommittees through careful evaluation of the preponderance of evidence and practices that have been assembled in support of the indicator. The following rubrics will be used to evaluate how the school complies with the indicator.

**(4) Highly Functional** – The preferred condition is documented, understood and accepted by staff, students and school constituents and easily observable throughout the school. It is supported by observable practices, written documentation and evidence. This is a strength of the school.

**(3) Operational** – The condition is in place and functionally supported and practiced. It may not always be fully enacted or easily evidenced in every aspect of the school program. The school functions acceptably in this area. The school may develop ways to improve in this area.

**(2) Emerging** – The condition is recognized as important by the school, but is inconsistently or irregularly applied. It is not supported with sufficient practices, evidence or documentation. There is room for improvement in this area.

**(1) Not Evident** – There is observable conflict or deficiency with the condition at the school. The school does not enact this condition.

### Determining indicator ratings

The school must reach consensus for ratings for each general indicator of success. Subcommittees should begin their work by securing the Required Evidence and evaluating the school's compliance with every Required Indicators of Success. Required items must be present in order for your school to be accredited in good standing. If you mark NO for any required indicator, it is strongly suggested that the school develop the required items before proceeding or correct the deficiency before moving forward with the process.

Then move into a careful analysis of your school's status using the General Indicators of Success. The general indicators have been specifically designed for each section and are written not only for the purpose of clarifying and explaining, but also to stimulate thought, reflection and self-evaluation by each subcommittee.

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 should arrive at a consensus about the correct rubric rating for each indicator of success.

The definition of what is expected for each rubric is explained and applies to all of the general indicators. It is the job of the subcommittee to assemble the evidence and practices that lead your group to an overall rating that agrees with the condition that is found in your school. If you have ranked a general indicator as Emerging (2) or Not Evident (1), this area must be addressed in a well-developed school action plan that will be implemented over the course of the accreditation cycle.

## 11. Reacting to a Self-Study Report Draft

A key concern of a consultant is the acceptability of all written reports and documentation related to the self-study process. It is critical that the consultant review drafts of all written materials prepared by the school. A site visit cannot be scheduled until the self-study and accompanying documentation materials have been reviewed and approved as ready by the consultant.

Many consultants prefer receiving drafts of self-study documents electronically. Others desire to review materials prepared using a paper format. Agree upon a way to share materials during the first consultant's visit to the school. After the documentation is received, the consultant must evaluate if the materials are clear, accurate and truthful. The consultant must also determine if the school has rated itself accurately and complies with all requirements.

Reviewing the drafts can be summarized into four tasks: Review, React, Suggest, and Approve.

### **Review It**

- Read each section from the viewpoint of a site visitor.
- Mark it up like an editor (partially).
- Make sure it has:
  - 1) Appropriate narrative responses to “Respond To:” for each section
  - 2) Required documentation and exhibits attached.
  - 3) Comments associated with each general indicator
  - 4) Answers to the summary questions at the end of each section.
  - 5) Items of concerns as noted from the standard area assessment
  - 6) Suggestions for addressing concerns identified in each standard area. Each concern (rated as 1 or 2) should be noted and have an associated plan for correction.
  - 7) A comprehensive school action plan related to the entire self-study process

### **Check for**

- Accuracy.
- Logic.
- Clarity.
- Completeness.
- Exhibits prepared recently.

### **Look for:**

- Grammatical and spelling accuracy.
- School improvement related to identified concerns, documented and planned.
- Clarity of information for team members.

### **React to It**

- Be positive and encouraging.
- Be specific.
- Suggest helpful alternatives.
- Be honest.
- Use tact.
- Point out successes as well as problems.
- Keep the process moving with few delays.
- Return drafts with inserted comments, readable scribbles or post-it notes and accompanying correspondence.
- Keep a copy of your work for future reference.
- Speak with the administrator or steering committee (in addition to your written response).

## 12. School Curriculum Requirements

A written curriculum is an NLSA Required Standard. For many schools this is typically one of the most misunderstood and challenging parts of the accreditation process. Curriculum development is an ongoing process for our schools. Consultants must make certain that a school's curriculum meets the requirements associated with NLSA.

Accredited schools continuously use a variety of assessment tools to evaluate the effectiveness of their curricular outcomes, making adjustments in related teaching strategies and instruction whenever necessary. Therefore the curriculum becomes a living document that guides and directs the instructive process. Teachers are continuously engaged with their curriculum for it establishes the direction for teaching and learning. There are options for our schools related to curriculum development.

Many LCMS districts have taken the lead on curriculum development for their schools. Several of our districts have been involved with joint curriculum mapping projects. Regional associations of Lutheran schools have also been heavily invested in curriculum work.

At a minimum, the NLSA expectations for curriculum design include written objectives (learning outcomes) for every grade level in every subject area designated by the standard area. Faith integration is a certain expectation related to curriculum development in Lutheran schools. Curriculum mapping and the Concordia Curriculum series (CPH) are also acceptable options related to curriculum development. The consultant is charged to assure that the school meets curriculum requirements associated with NLSA.

## 13. Determining School Readiness for the Team Visit?

After careful examination of all self-study documentation, the NLSA consultant determines the school's readiness for the site visit. In addition to a careful analysis of all written documentation the consultant must ask:

- 1) Are the rating supported with sufficient evidence and practices?
- 2) Did the school follow all the rules associated with the self-study process?
- 3) Based on what you have received, been told and observed is the school eligible for accreditation?

If in the consultant's judgment, the school has been the requirements associated with NLSA and is eligible for accreditation, the consultant shall provide formal approval of school readiness for a team visit. The consultant should notify the team captain and the district accreditation that the school is ready at least 30 days before the team visit.

## 14. Requesting a Delay

If the consultant believes there is a risk that the school may not be eligible for accreditation he/she may suggest that the school delay the visit. Accreditation application may be requested using the following procedure:

- 1) Requests for extension must be presented in writing to the Director of Accreditation, including a complete description of the circumstances that have resulted in the request.

- 2) Written requests must be endorsed in writing by the District Education Executive or District Accreditation Commissioner and submitted to the NLSA Director.
- 3) The school's written explanation of its request and the district endorsement of the school's extension application must be sent together with a \$50 extension fee to the NLSA office in St. Louis.
- 4) The NLSA Executive Committee will consider all extension requests and its decision is final. Extension may be granted for a period of one year.

### **Addendum #1 Benefits of Accreditation**

1. Allows you to identify and celebrate your strengths.
2. Exposes weaknesses that should be corrected.
3. Provides validation for your program's existence.
4. Prepares a "blueprint" for improvement for the next seven years.
5. Removes your ability to procrastinate and postpone important things that should be done.
6. Rallies support from people who might otherwise not have been involved.
7. Builds cohesiveness among staff members.
8. Strengthens your image in the community.
9. Provides you with a PR tool for your arsenal.
10. Connects you with hundreds of other LCMS schools that have already worked through the process.
11. Provides a set of objective eyes (site evaluation team) to review your work.
12. Provides accountability to your community, constituents and congregation.
13. Compares your program to a set of objective national standards for Lutheran schools.
14. Provides the opportunity to evaluate the spiritual component of your school.
15. Helps establish an image for your program.
16. Provides motivation for staff development.
17. Validates your credibility through an objective outside agency.
18. Publicly acknowledges the quality of your institution.
19. Provides the opportunity for public acknowledgement and celebration.
20. Is something every Lutheran preschool, elementary school, and high school can and should attain.



## **Addendum #2 Required Evidence and Documentation**

### **Standard One**

- The written purpose/philosophy/mission statement

### **Standard Two**

- Nondiscrimination policy
- School discipline code

### **Standard Three**

- School discipline code
- Governing board handbook or policy manual including policies relating to roles; board administrator and pastor
- Latest copy of the annual LCMS Early Childhood and School Statistical Report
- The administrator's job description

### **Standard Four**

- The school's staff development plan
- Nondiscriminatory salary and benefit scale

### **Standard Five**

- Written curriculum, including learner outcomes (objectives) and scope and sequence for every grade level for the following subjects: religion, mathematics, science, reading, language arts, social studies, art, music, physical education. (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 what percentage of each school week is allocated each subject (activity) at each level. Compare this with state requirements.
- An analysis of the results of standardized tests administered at your school for each grade level for the past three years. Describe how this information is used to evaluate and improve student learning.

### **Standard Six**

- Enrollment/Admission policy
- Volunteer handbook
- Crisis Emergency Plan

### **Standard Seven**

- School floor plan