NATIONAL LUTHERAN SCHOOL ACCREDITATION

**STANDARDS BASED CUMULATIVE ANNUAL REPORT/School Improvement Plan**

**(Please use this form and complete on computer.)**

**Part I: Basic Information**

School: **St. James Lutheran School** Address: 108 James Street City, State, Zip: Northrop, MN 56075

LCMS District: Minnesota South School e-mail address: [**sjl\_principal@frointiernet.net**](mailto:sjl_principal@frointiernet.net)

[Sarah\_M\_Garcia@alum.blc.edu](mailto:Sarah_M_Garcia@alum.blc.edu)

School Administrator: Sarah M. Garcia

Co-accredited by (if applicable):

Report is for year (Circle one) 1 2 3 4 **5** 6 (Time to Re-apply) Date of most recent NLSA site visit: 2007

**Administrator’s Signature: Sarah M. Garcia Date: 05/15/2012**

**School Board Chair’s Signature: Jason Schuder Date: 05/15/2012**

**(By this coming from the email address above I state that each recommendation in the Visiting Team Report either has or will receive serious consideration for action.)**

**This report is due in your district office no later than May 15. The district accreditation committee will review by June 15.**

**The annual fee is due in the NLSA office no later than October 15.**

**Part II: List any significant School Improvements or Changes this year: The school has completed its playground installation with the dedication being held November 8, 2011. It has been a popular addition not only for the school, but for the community of Northrop as well.**

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| **Section & Standard Number** | **Visiting Team Concern** **and Recommendation** | **Target**  **Year** | **Year**  **Addressed** | **Action Taken** |
| I.  Philiosophy  1:05 | **Concern:** Lengthy belief statements attached to philosophy statement.  **Recommendation**: Remove belief statements and edit new document. | 2008 | 2008 | The principal has edited the philosophy statement and removed the belief statements from the school philosophy. |
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| II.  School and Congregation  2:10 | **C**: Concern has been expressed regarding its outreach and in-reach program.  **R**: Congregation and school should continue the action to reach out to member students not enrolled in the school and to families who do not know Jesus. | Ongoing | 2008 | The staff will work to promote the school to member families as well as to those who do not know Jesus. Congregational families who have children not enrolled will be contacted. An effort to reach non-churched members will continue. |
| III.  School and Community | **C:** There is a need for implementing a volunteer to recruit new families from the area.  **R:** Investigate opportunities for community to volunteer time in classrooms, playgrounds, lunch period to open up prep periods for teahcers throughout the day. | 2008 | 2008 | The Parent Teacher League and members of the congregation will be approached regarding volunteers for helping make more time available to teachers for prep time. St. James elders have surveyed members to identify people who have an interest in helping at the school. |
| IV.  School Climate  4:02 | **C:** One class/classroom is separated from the rest of the school by distance and thus from the resources and benefits of the administrator, colleagues, and the main facility.  **R:** St. James congregation and the Board of Christian Education are encouraged to seek a means to find additional classroom space so that all students and faculty can have a sense of “belonging” to St. James School. | 2009 | 2008 | All classrooms are now in one building. |
| V.  Administration A:  School Board  5A:07 | **C:** The Board of Christian Education manual is outdated and incomplete in many areas.  **R:** The Board of Christian Education will review and revise its policy manual. | Ongoing | 2008 | The Board of Christian Education has begun and will continue to work on revising its policy manual. |
| V.  Administration A: School Board  5A:15 | **C:** The vague budgetary process and accounting procedures make financial accountability and budgetary decisions by school administration and future planning by the Board of Christian Education difficult.  **R:** It is recommended that the congregation, Board of Christian Education, and administrator work together to determine what type of information is needed and can be practically extracted so that appropriate budgetary decisions and planning can be made. | 2010 | 2008 | The church has been reticent to change its budgetary process. The Board of Christian Education will continue to strive to achieve a plan which facilitates planning for school needs. |
| V.  Administration A:  School Board  5A:16 | **C:**  While oral interviews presented some evidence that long-range planning is being done, there was no evidence presented that long-range goals were written, published, and systematically reviewed by the board, administration, and faculty.  **R:** A more systematic and regular process of long-range planning will occur. | Ongoing | 2008 | The Board of Christian Education continues to reassess goals based upon current and expected enrollment and income. |
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| V.  Administration B:  Administrator  5B:15, 5B 19 | **C:** Personnel files are not complete.  **R:**  The administrator should be given more office time to complete Minnesota, NLSA, and other required administrative duties and still have sufficient time to adequately prepare for instructional duties. Files should be updated. | Ongoing | 2008 | The personnel files are now complete. |
| V.  Administration B.  Administrator  5B:07 | **C:**  The administrator does not have adequate time to attend to all administrative duties and still have adequate time to prepare lessons.  **R:** With the current enrollment levels and a gradually increasing number of students, the Board of Christian Education should find ways to allow the administrator additional time off during the week. | 2008 | 2008 | Arrangements have been made to provide the administrator time to attend to administrative duties during art, music, and confirmation instruction time during each week in addition to other whole or half-days requested by the administrator on an as-needed basis. |
| VI.  Professional Personnel  6:13 | **C:**  Professional conference attendance and membership is not as strongly supported as could be.    **R:** The congregation and Board of Christian Education is encouraged to give more direct financial support to the professional conferences in their area of expertise or needs. | Ongoing | 2008 | The Board of Christian Education has encouraged teachers to seek professional growth and stated its intention to help with financial support. The PTL has also indicated its willingness to support this need by funding attendance at the LEA conventions. |
| VI.  Professional Personnel  6:16 | **C:** There exists little to no time during the day for course and material preparation. Each teacher has time demands with extra-curricular activities. Because of these demands the quality of instruction may suffer. Teacher well-being might also suffer. | 2009 | 2009 | A part-time teacher will be available to help teachers on Tuesdays and Thursdays of each week. |
| VI.  Professional Personnel | **C:**  The faculty handbook is not a handbook. There are a myriad of policies that are not addressed, i.e. jury duty, sick days, personal days, etc.  **R:** A more thorough faculty handbook should be developed. The faculty, administrator and Board of Christian Education should establish policies that address personnel and operational issues not presently included in the faculty handbook. | 2011 | 2008 | The faculty and school board have addressed most of the policies that need to be included in the handbook. However, completion is not official and will be finalized during the course of 2011. |
| VII.  Curriculum-General  7:05 | **C:** Learner outcomes should match curriculum taught in the classroom.  **R:**  The staff needs to reevaluate the curriculum being taught with the written learner outcomes in the area of music, physical education, and art so they are in agreement with each other. | 2011 | 2008 | The faculty has begun working on an art curriculum and will address subsequently the music and physical education curriculum. Physical education staff development took place in 2011. Movement toward recreation and lifetime fitness is progressing. |
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| VII.  Curriculum-  Language Arts | **C:** The staff reports being uncertain about the direction to take for updating the language arts curriculum.  **R:** The staff needs to come to a consensus about K-6 curriculum, learner outcomes, and instructional materials. | 2008 | 2008 | The faculty continues to work on the language arts curriculum. We have begun using the 2008 edition of Shurley English. The faculty has come to a consensus regarding the language arts curriculum.Review in other areas continues: we hope to purchase new science materials next year. |
| VII.  Curriculum-Math | **C:** There is a need to challenge the gifted and talented.  **R:** St. James should provide a variety of enrichment activities for students who finish their work before the rest of the class. | Ongoing | 2008 | The faculty is aware of the importance of providing enrichment activities. They are working on procuring materials to assist them with this goal. |
| VII.  Curriculum-Math | **C:** The switching of students to different math classes causes the loss of instructional time.  **R:**  It is recommended to work on a more structured schedule for transfer times. | 2009 | 2008 | This is no longer being done. |
| VII.  Curriculum-Art  7:05 | **C:**  There is no sequenced or organized art curriculum.  **R:** The faculty should explore the possibility of an art curriculum as finances allow. Incorporate some art history and appreciation. The faculty should develop an in-house sequence so all major media are explored. | 2011 | 2008 | We have begun working on a structured art curriculum in consulting with a person with art training. Grades 5-8 will be completed by the end of the next school term. An art curriculum for grades 5-8 is now in place. |
| VII.  Curriculum-Art | **C:** Art supplies are scattered in various storage spaces.  **R:** Locate art materials centrally. | 2011 | 2008 | All art materials are now placed in two adjacent storage closets, organized and labeled. |
| VII.  Curriculum-Social Studies | **C:** There is a concern about the quarterly rotation of the upper grade social studies and science curriculum  **R:** Reevaluate the quarterly rotation of social studies and science in the upper grades. | 2008 | 2008 | This has been done. The new rotation will assure the inclusion of Minnesota history on a regular basis. Geography texts will also be updated by 2013. |
| VIII.  Curriculum-Music | **C:** The music program does not follow the written recommendations as stated in the 2000 School Improvement Plan.  **R:** In planning for the 2007-2008 school year, the staff should develop and implement a music curriculum. | Ongoing | 2008 | The staff has begun discussions concerning the music curriculum. While staffing and scheduling considerations make this an issue difficult to rectify completely, we will be striving to make annual improvements. |
| VII.  Curriculum-Science | **C:** There is a concern as to the time allotted to each curricular area and whether the allotted time does in fact meet the state standards.  **R:** The administrator and faculty are strongly encouraged to consult the Minnesota Department of Education to obtain the state standards for time allocation. They are further urged to reexamine the times as indicated in the self-study documentation and make adjustments accordingly to bring class time allotments at St. James into closer compliance**.** | 2010 | 2008 | Time allotted each curricular area meets the MDE standards for the 2010-2011 school year. Science texts are in review. We have reflected upon the Minnesota Standards in science and will be aligning instruction in physical science with their recommendations. New texts will be update by 2013. |
| VII.  Curriculum-Physical Education | **C:** A majority of physical education classes are driven by seasonal sports.  **R:** The faculty should explore ways to incorporate the whole spectrum of physical education in the curriculum (i.e. Presidential Physical Fitness program). | 2009 | Ongoing | We will begin using the Presidential Physical Fitness program at the seventh and eighth grade level next school term. Speed stacking will also be part of our school-wide physical education program next year. Staff development has facilitated new instruction. |
| VII.  Curriculum-Computer Education | **C:** The lack of enough computers poses a problem for scheduling lab times.  **R:** Seek out funding sources to increase the number of computers in the lab. | 2008 | 2008 | We received ten computers for use in the computer lab. The lab is used frequently. Time is scheduled for each classroom to use the lab throughout the week. We have acquired SMART boards and updated networks. |
| VII.  Curriculum-Computer Education | **C:** The lack of room in the lab poses a problem for adding more computers.  **R:** Look at other options. | Ongoing | Ongoing | There is currently no other option. Should a building plan occur in the future, a larger computer lab will be recommended. This is part of our long-term planning. |
| VIII.  Instruction  8:06 | **C:** While there is excellent instruction in each of the rooms observed by the team, there is concern with the amount of time given in each classroom for a specific subject when time is split between two grade levels. For example, a 45-50 minute math period only allows about 20 minutes of instruction per grade level.  **R:** Consider a gradual curriculum adjustment/rotation that would allow more in depth instruction of content, student interaction with content, and reinforcement concepts. For example, consider combining 3rd and 4th Grade English or 7th and 8th Grade math or 5th and 6th Grade science. | 2009 | 2008 | If reduction in force takes place, this is an area which must be given very serious consideration. The recommendation is somewhat in conflict with the previous visitation team’s (2000) observation which encouraged us to separate class instruction. We will continue to be dedicated to providing appropriate amounts of instructional times to our students. As noted previously, we are hoping to have a lengthened school day beginning next year. |
| VIII.  Instruction  8:05, 8:06 | **C:** Varying student ability level, development and learning needs are able to be met to some degree through public school assistance. However, there is concern that the needs of the talented and gifted students are not being met to the degree needed.  **R:** The administration and faculty are urged to utilize innovative methods of individualizing instruction for all students with particular attention to those whose needs are not as well addressed through public assistance. Consideration should be given to utilizing community resources, both public and private, for curriculum enrichment. | Ongoing | 2008 | The faculty has made a commitment to become more cognizant of individual needs for the talented and gifted students. The teachers will be looking for ways to individualize assignments for these students. The needs of these students will be given special attention when computer software purchases are made. The use of the Internet to enrich learning these students is being pursued. |
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| IX.  Instructional Materials  9:09 | **C:**  Outside of Accelerated Reader books, library holdings are small.  **R:** Increase library holdings outside of AR books, especially for the upper grades. | Ongoing | Ongoing | The faculty will add non-AR books to our library annually. We also will increase our efforts to encourage students and parents to use the local public libraries. We have purchased a license so students can take tests on all books for which an AR test has been written. |
| IX.  Instructional Materials  9:09 | **C:** Instructional materials are stored in various places in the building  **R:**  Inventory instructional materials and store them by curricular area. | Ongoing | 2008 | Providing storage space large enough to store all of our instructional materials is a long-range goal dependent on a building project taking place. In the meantime, as we look at restructuring of classroom assignments due to reduction in force, we would store our materials in a way which provides easy access to those items we need. |
| IX.  Instructional Materials  9:03 | **C:** Instructional materials in the classroom are minimal and many of them are owned by teachers.  **R:** Continue to upgrade and provide materials to assist teachers and students in the learning process and invest in school-owned materials. | Ongoing | 2008 | The faculty will use “wish trees” which encourages congregational members to purchase instructional materials for the classrooms. The PTL has also increased its allotment to teachers for the purpose of buying instructional materials. This is also an item for long-range planning as we work towards having a more meaningful budget. |
| X.  Student Services  10A: Guidance | **C:** Staying current with public school programs and services remains a challenge.  **R:** Stay informed about programs, policies, and services offered through the public school district. The administrator needs to meet at least annually with service providers or service coordinators from the public school district. | 2008 | 2008 | The administrator meets with the service providers from the public school district. We have hired a principal that is licensed by the State of Minnesota as a public school principal and a public school superintendent. This person is trained to deal with all school financial and legal obligations under state and federal law. |
| X.  Student Services  10B: Health and Safety  10B:01 | **C:** Policies and procedures have not been adequately studied, revised, and practiced.  **R:** All policies and procedures must be studied, revised, and practiced at ragular determined intervals following state guidelines. | 2008 | 2008 | Policies and procedures have been studied. They will be revised and practiced commencing with the coming school term. |
| X.  Student Services  10B: Health and Safety  10B:02 | **C:** Students are often left unsupervised in the hallways, library, and computer room.  **R:** Policies and procedures need to be studied and established to ensure the safety of students in these situations. | Ongoing | 2008 | Students no longer may use the hallways. We do still allow students to use the library and computer lab for research and study. Teachers check on the students regularly. |
| X.  Student Services  10B: Health and Safety  10B:09 | **C:** Students crossing to the 3rd and 4th Grade classroom are at some risk.  **R:** Painted crosswalks need to be completed. Procedures for student crossing should be studied to ensure greater safety. | 2008 | 2008 | These things have been done. |
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| X.  Student Services  10B: Health and Safety  10B:10 | **C:** Students and parents were observed not following adopted policies and procedures when arriving and leaving the school grounds.  **R:** The board and administrator should explore avenues of communication that will assure 100% compliance with arrival and departure policies and procedures. | 2009 | 2008 | The administrator will consult with the board during the coming school term to determine avenues of communication that will assure 100% compliance with arrival and departure policies and procedures. |
| X.  Student Services  10B: Health and Safety  10B:02 | **C:** Communication throughout the facility and 3rd and 4th Grade classroom across the street are very poor and offer a safety risk.  **R:** The board, administrator, and faculty need to study the deficiencies in building and facility communication capabilities and make changes as needed. | Ongoing | 2008 | All classes are in the main school building. The room across the street in no longer used. |
| X.  Student Services  10B: Health and  Safety | **C:** The only phone numbers posted at each phone location is 911.  **R:** The administrator needs to explore what additional phone numbers need to be posted and make the changes**.** | 2008 | 2008 | This has been done. |
| X.  Student Services  10B: Health and Safety | **C:** There is no weather radio available on campus.  **R:** The administrator should gain approval to purchase a weather radio for the school and have it available for use. | 2008 | 2008 | This has been done; however, radio reception from the nearest relay station is very weak and undependable. We monitor our local radio station and the Internet weather services for weather updates. |
| X.  Student Services  10C: Food Services | **C:** Facilities and storage for the school hot lunch program are limited and confining.  **R:** Concern for improvement of the kitchen and storage facilities should be an important part of any future change in facilities. | Ongoing | 2008 | This is an item which will be part of our long-term planning. |
| XI.  Physical Facilities  11:05 | **C:** The location of grades three and four in the City Hall presents several concerns: isolation, separation from the rest of the school, less access to resources.  **R:** Continue the efforts of the building committee to find resources for expansion. | Ongoing | 2008 | If reduction in force takes place, this will no longer be a concern. Otherwise, the issue will be part of our long-term planning. |
| XI.  Physical Facilities | **C:** Storage is scattered around the facility.  **R:** Include storage space in any building plan. Arrange storage by curricular area or some other system. | Ongoing | 2008 | The issue will be part of our long-term planning. |
| XII.  Finance  12:02 | **C:** A lack of a school budget makes it difficult for the board, administrator and faculty to prioritize school needs and move to meet those needs. | 2010 | 2008 | Some adjustments have been made in the reporting and budgeting processes which are helpful to the board, administrator and faculty. We will continue to work on improving the way in which the sharing of information happens. |
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| XII.  Finance  12:04 | **C:** Financial reports indicate serious financial strain on congregational resources.  **R:** The leadership of St. James should view the financial needs of the congregation and school as its greatest short and long range challenge. Evaluation, study, and planning are a must. | Ongoing | 2008 | The loss of Thrivent Giving Plus funds has and will continue to impact the school’s financial situation. |
| XII.  Finance  12:10 | **C:** It is difficult to determine the actual support provided by auxiliary organizations and the purpose of such funds.  **R:** Auxiliary organizations should develop budgets and share with the administration of the school what funds might be available to the school or congregation on an annual basis. | 2009 | 2008 | This concern will be shared with the auxiliary organizations; however, their ability to offer assistance to the school is determined in great part by the success of their fund raising events. |