

Section I: Mission And Vision

Every Lutheran school needs a carefully formulated mission statement, as well as a comprehensive statement of philosophy. These serve as the basis for forming school goals, learner outcomes and action plans as well as determining whether the school is actually achieving its purposes. Through the process of self-study, all phases of the school program are evaluated in order to determine if they are being carried out in accordance with the stated mission and philosophy.

An evaluation of any institution must begin with the rationale for its existence. Declarations regarding its theological and educational basis and intended learner outcomes provide direction for organization and program. How these declarations are developed affects their validity ownership by the school's constituents.

The NLSA self-study process results in new understanding of the organization and its place in its community. In order to determine the direction of the school, leaders must develop a mental picture of the preferred future state of the school. Vision is the mental picture that is imprinted upon the hearts and minds of the leaders that simply will not fade away. A school's vision does not just happen. It needs to be cultivated and nurtured. NLSA helps Lutheran school leaders develop a mental image of their desired future. This results in intentional, ongoing improvement.

The **Mission and Vision** section is the most important section and is critical to evaluating each of the sections involved with the self-study. It helps determine who we are, where we have been, and what we are to become. Therefore, it is especially important that the report of this committee be presented to the entire faculty and administration for approval and modification before the remainder of the study is started.

OVERVIEW

Each school should develop its own mission and philosophy statements consistent with the unique needs of the students and families it serves and consistent with the theology of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

Since these statements are basic to the development of meaningful educational programs and the creation of an environment conducive to learning, it is important that such statements be developed through the use of the democratic process; thereby reflecting the best thinking of the school staff and others in the community it serves.

Schools having written statements of mission and philosophy need to review them for current relevance and to determine whether they are consistent with the needs and characteristics of children currently being served by the school. A review of materials related to the development of a Lutheran school philosophy should include: "Integrating the Faith: A Teacher's Guide for Curriculum in Lutheran Schools, Lutheran School Administrator's Handbook" series, "Planning for Lutheran Elementary Schools Series," and "In His Hands," a manual for beginning and operating Lutheran early childhood programs. Refer to the LCMS District and Congregational Services School Ministry "Resource Catalog" and also to the new curriculum guides from Concordia Publishing House as they become available.

Schools developing an initial statement of philosophy may find some of the following suggestions helpful. The formulation process might include three stages of development. In the first, all participants would individually examine their beliefs concerning the overall purposes of Christian education in our society, the role of the Lutheran school in the educational process, and the unique role of this particular school in light of the special individual needs of the students it serves.

The second stage consists of a series of discussions focusing on desirable philosophy and objectives for this school. In this process complete agreement of all participants should not be anticipated, since each individual brings to the discussion his own personal biases and beliefs. It is important that divergent views expressed by participants be heard and considered. It is also desirable that a consensus or majority viewpoint be arrived at before the conclusion of this step.

In the third stage, a committee of the participants should draft the statement of philosophy discussed by the group and submit it to them for modification or approval. At this point it may be desirable to submit the statement to the administration

and school board for approval.

PLEASE RESPOND TO THE FOLLOWING:

- A. How are the statements of mission and philosophy reflected in the operation of the school, including administration, instruction, cocurricular activities, and learner outcomes?

Our Statement of philosophy is reflected in our called Christian educators. The administration draws from the school's philosophy when it deals with staff, students, and parents in the areas of mutual interest: feeding the lambs that God has entrusted to our care. The philosophy provides the framework for effective ministry: all staff members approach the ministry of education with the understanding that the Word of God is the norm of our beliefs. Therefore, not only is the Word of God foremost in our teaching, but it is reflected in the way we deal with one another: we seek to speak the truths of God in a caring way that is beneficial to all. Law and Gospel help us in our approach to discipline or conflict management, whether it involves staff, pastor, parents, students or other members of the congregation. All learner outcomes are predicated on the three large areas of our mission statement. "teaching the faith" is the practical existence as a Christian day school. "Guidance in the Christian life" is the practical - putting faith into action. Finally all of our learner outcomes seek to help each student's "personal growth and development." The school shows God's love and educates with respect towards God's Word. Students are guided to respect each other and to look out for the needs of fellow classmates. School activities are not only educational in nature, but often promote Christian concern for others, such as participation in food drives, Feed My Starving Children and, "Orphan Grain Train" clothing donations.

- B. How are staff, students, parents and congregation members kept aware of the school's philosophy?

Staff, students parents, and congregational members are reminded of the school's philosophy through the "Feed My Lambs" signs placed inside and outside of Zion. The school's philosophy is clearly defined in the school Handbook, which is given out to each school family. The "open house" and registration night and orientations, along with conferences and bimonthly Zion Education League meetings inform and reinforce Zion's philosophy and approach to Christian education. In quarterly council and voter meeting, the philosophy of our school is presented to the congregation in the reports of our school activities, finances, goals and proposals. The philosophy is reflected in Zion's bulletin and newsletter and in the weekly "News and Notes" published weekly and sent home with the students who prefer paper copies.

ATTACHMENTS:

- Your school's mission statement, purpose, and/or philosophy.
- Your congregation's purpose/mission statement.

Standard 1:

The School Is Mission Driven.

RESPOND TO THE FOLLOWING:

A. How is the written mission of the school reflected in its operation, including administration, instruction, co-curricular activities and learner outcomes?

Our Statement of philosophy is reflected in our called Christian educators. The administration draws from the school's philosophy when it deals with staff, students, and parents in the areas of mutual interest: feeding the lambs that God has entrusted to our care. The philosophy provides the framework for effective ministry: all staff members approach the ministry of education with the understanding that the Word of God is the norm of our beliefs. Therefore, not only is the Word of God foremost in our teaching, but it is reflected in the way we deal with one another: we seek to speak the truths of God in caring way that is beneficial to all. Law and Gospel help us in our approach to discipline or conflict management, whether it involves staff, pastor, parents, students or other members of the congregation. All learner outcomes are predicated on the three large areas of our mission statement. "teaching the faith" is the practical existence as a Christian day school. "Guidance in the Christian life" is the practical - putting faith into action. Finally all of our learner outcomes seek to help each student's "personal growth and development." The school shows God's love and educates with respect towards God's Word. Students are guided to respect each other and to look out for the needs of fellow classmates . School activities are not only educational in nature, but often promote Christian concern for others, such as participation in food drives, Feed My Starving Children and, "Orphan Grain Train" clothing donations.

B. How are staff members, students, parents and congregation members kept aware of the school's mission?

Staff, students parents, and congregational members are reminded of the school's philosophy through the "Feed My Lambs" signs placed inside and outside of Zion. The school's philosophy is clearly defined in the school Handbook, shish is given out to each school family. The "open house" and registration night and orientations, along with conferences and bimonthly Zion Education League meetings inform and reinforce Zion's philosophy and approach to Christian education. in quarterly council and voter meeting, the philosophy of our school is presented to the congregation in the reports of our school activities, finances, goals and proposals. The philosophy is reflected in Zion's bulletin and newsletter and in the weekly "News and Notes" published weekly and sent home with the students who prefer paper copies.

Indicate whether or not the school meets the required indicators of success by circling **Yes** or **No** for each statement.

Required Indicators of Success:

YES NO * 1:01 The written mission statement reflects a school philosophy and purpose rooted in Holy Scripture.

YES NO *1:02 The school's mission statement, beliefs, and the school's expectations for students learning guide the procedures, policies, and decisions of the school and is evident in the culture of the school.

GENERAL INDICATORS OF SUCCESS:

General Indicators of Success help the school quantify its compliance with the Required Standard. Evaluate your school's compliance with each General Indicator of Success using the criterion defined below. In the "Comments" section related to that indicator, specify how your school falls short of full compliance for any indicator marked less than "Met in Full."

Met in Full—The indicator of success has been completely accomplished by the school. It is verifiable through evidence and documentation.

Mostly Met—The indicator of success has been partially accomplished by the school. Documentation and evidence regularly indicate that the school is well on the way toward full accomplishment of the indicator.

Rarely Met—Infrequent implementation of an indicator of success. This indicator rarely occurs in the school and evidence and documentation for compliance are minimally present.

Not Presently Met—There has been no progress by the school toward the accomplishment of this indicator of success.

1:03 The school's mission is aligned with its core values and those of its various stakeholder groups and organizations.

 3 **Met in Full (3)** **Mostly Met (2)** **Rarely Met (1)** **Not Presently Met (0)** 3

1:04 The school's mission aligns with its core values and charts the course for accomplishing its mission.

 3 **Met in Full (3)** **Mostly Met (2)** **Rarely Met (1)** **Not Presently Met (0)** 3

1:05 The school's mission was developed in accordance with governance policy.

 3 **Met in Full (3)** **Mostly Met (2)** **Rarely Met (1)** **Not Presently Met (0)** 3

1:06 The school's mission and vision is communicated effectively to staff, parents, students, and operating congregation(s).

 3 **Met in Full (3)** **Mostly Met (2)** **Rarely Met (1)** **Not Presently Met (0)** 3

1:07 The school's goals, learner outcomes, and activities are aligned to the school's mission.

 3 **Met in Full (3)** **Mostly Met (2)** **Rarely Met (1)** **Not Presently Met (0)** 3

1:08 The school annually reviews its core values, mission and vision.

 3 **Met in Full (3)** **Mostly Met (2)** **Rarely Met (1)** **Not Presently Met (0)** 3

1:09 The school uses a variety of indicators to ensure that expectations for student learning reflect student needs, community expectations and local, state and national standards.

 3 Met in Full (3) Mostly Met (2) Rarely Met (1) Not Presently Met (0) 3

Total: 21

COMMENT ON THE WHOLE SECTION ON MISSION AND VISION:

- A. Are the required indicators of success met? YES
- B. Is the total for the indicators of success a minimum of 14 points? YES
- C. Based on this portion of the self-study, what are the strengths of your school?

Jesus is the strength of Christian faith and life; it is therefore the strength of our congregation and school. The message Zion presents is that Jesus Christ is preeminent in our faith and that Christ will be prominent in the teaching and in the guidance that Zion provides

- D. Based on the concerns identified in your self-study, you will develop future plans to improve your school. Identify every item marked as less than "Met in Full" with specific plans for action to be taken by the school over the next cycle of accreditation. Any areas identified as needing improvement in the "Respond to:" component must also be included in the proposed school action plan and addressed in the cumulative annual report.