



Team Captain's Manual

2011-2012 EDITION

*For Standards-Based and On-Going
Improvement Processes Related to
Elementary Schools and High Schools*



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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TO THE TEAM CAPTAIN

Congratulations, you have been selected to provide assistance to a school going through the process of National Lutheran School Accreditation. As the school's assigned visiting team captain, your work will play a critical role in the school's accreditation process. During your visit, your team will provide an unbiased response to the school's self-evaluation and plan for improvement. The visiting team will make recommendations that will result in continued school improvement.

Your appointment as team captain confirms your district's high degree of respect for your leadership abilities. You have been selected as a team captain because you have demonstrated professional insights, experience, common sense, and the ability to work well with others. As you guide the activities of the visiting team, you are not expected to be an expert, but a peer who presents an outside viewpoint as to the school's operation. In your work, you share a great deal of trust with the school staff, because the findings in the reports you share will have a dynamic effect on the school's future.

As you conduct your work as team captain, you will be called upon to validate that the work the school has prepared is accurate and truthful. This will be accomplished as your team members visit, interview, observe, and evaluate written documentation. Your responsibilities also call upon you to ensure that the school complies with Standards and Indicators of Success required by NLSA. Your purpose is not to criticize or to find fault, but to build up the school and make specific, helpful recommendations that will result in school improvement.

Your work is extremely important to the school you serve. However, you will not only give as part of the visiting process, you will also gain. You will acquire insights and new ideas for your own teaching or administration opportunities. Your work will be of great benefit not only to the school you visit but also to yourself.

You have already experienced the benefits of NLSA in your own school setting. That experience is an important element of your training as you serve your appointed school. This manual also serves to document the requirements and conditions of your work as team captain. Read it carefully, because it contains everything you need to complete your task successfully.

Thank you for volunteering to serve as captain of the Visiting Team. The visited school and the National Lutheran School Accreditation Commission are grateful for your willingness to serve in this capacity and for the willingness of your school to release you for this purpose. God bless your efforts on behalf of the school and its students.

**Terry L. Schmidt, Director
National Lutheran School Accreditation**

MISSION, PURPOSE AND VALUES

The Team Captain and NLSA

An organization that excels is guided by an articulated mission statement that clearly defines the purpose for its existence. Organization leaders are responsible for articulating the mission so that every stakeholder understands their individual responsibilities in regard to accomplishing the stated mission. When the mission, purpose and values are strategically aligned with the actions of each stakeholder, the organization is assured of implementing and living its mission.

A team captain is a critical stakeholder in the NLSA process. The captain's role and responsibilities are aligned with the purposes of our organization. A team captain is committed to helping his or her assigned school improve. They work with team members to make sure the school's information is accurate and truthful and the goals are realistic, measurable and attainable. Their efforts ensure the quality of the Lutheran school. The team captain has an essential responsibility within our organization. The success of our organization is directly aligned with the efficiency and effectiveness of the work of every NLSA team captain. Therefore, it is critical that the captain is familiar with the mission, purpose and values of NLSA and internalize them within his or her work with schools.

NLSA Mission:

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

NLSA Purpose:

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

The Core Values of NLSA:

1. Christian culture in every Lutheran school.
2. Educational excellence.
3. Innovation that results in improved student learning.
4. Ongoing improvement.

THE ROLE OF THE TEAM CAPTAIN

MISSION:

Provide an unbiased response to the school's self-evaluation and plan for improvement. Make recommendations that will lead to continued improvement.

ROLE:

Prepare the visitation team's written report based upon observations and judgments made during the site visit.

FOCUS:

The event

KEY CONCERN:

Unbiased evaluation

Team Captain's Job Description

QUALIFICATIONS:

Unless the district has requested an exception, the NLSA Director will appoint as captain only a person who:

1. Received specific training by the district or NLSA to equip him to lead the activities of a visiting team.
2. Currently serves or recently retired as a teacher or administrator in a Lutheran (LCMS) school (childcare, early childhood, elementary, middle, and/or secondary).
3. Has successfully led a Lutheran school through the NLSA process used by the school at which he or she will captain the visiting team.
4. Has served as a member of a NLSA visiting team.
5. Is willing and able to lead one or more NLSA visiting teams.

SELECTION:

1. The school may request a qualified team captain, but the captain is recommended by the district and appointed by the NLSA Director.
2. The captain should be appointed at least three months before the scheduled site visit.
3. Ordinarily, the captain has experience at the same level of school (early childhood, elementary, secondary) as the school to be visited.
4. The prospective captain is contacted by the district and/or the school administrator before appointment to determine the captain's willingness to serve that school. Correspondence stating the captain's appointment is sent from the NLSA office to district and school.

DUTIES:

1. Confer with the school administrator regularly until the site visit is completed and the Visiting Team Report has been given to the school.
2. Contact the NLSA consultant to ensure that the school is ready for the site visit.
3. Together with the school administrator, establish a tentative schedule and agenda for the visit.
4. Contact the visiting team members as soon as possible after they have been appointed, informing them of the visit schedule and asking them to complete the Assignment Preference Form and Visiting Team Biography Form.
5. Ensure that you and all the team members receive the school's self-study report no later than one month before the scheduled visit. If you do not receive the report on time, reschedule the visit.
6. Arrange visit details with the school administrator (housing, mileage, meals, team supplies, technology needs, data entry assistance, etc.).
7. When possible, conduct a meeting of the visiting team on site approximately one month before the visit to review the task and to train the team.

8. Make visiting team committee assignments and remind the members to study the self-study report and arrive at the school prepared for their work.
9. Supervise the team and be a liaison between the administrator and the team during the visit.
10. Be a model team member, preparing your report first and leading the team through its review.
11. Instruct, direct, encourage, challenge, support and advise team members during the visit.
12. Review rough drafts of team reports before they are presented for first consideration by the team.
13. Lead the team in considering, discussing, adapting, correcting, and adopting each committee report.
14. Prepare the visiting team's report summary, listing the team's recommendation for or against accreditation, outstanding strengths, and any major deficiencies.
15. Collect all final committee reports before dismissing the team.
16. Lead the team's Oral Report.
17. Edit the Visiting Team Report as needed, and return it to the school within two weeks after the visit. Be sure to include the Team Report Submission Checklist, School Profile of the Self-Study Report and biographical information on team members in the final copy of the Visiting Team Report. Remind the school to send copies to the district accreditation commission and the team members.
18. Give the school administrator copies of "School Evaluation of Team Captain" and "School Evaluation of Consultant" forms and remind the administrator to send them to the NLSA office.
19. Remind the school administrator of the responsibility and ongoing school improvement and the annual report.

A BRIEF OUTLINE OF STEPS REQUIRED BY NLSA

Application

The school applies for accreditation and receives application materials from its district office or the national office. The school completes all required application forms and prepares to pay the application fee. Forms and fees are submitted through the district office. When the application is processed, an NLSA consultant is assigned to help the school with its self-study process.

Self-Study

From the date of its application, the school has between nine months and three years to evaluate itself based on its unique mission and NLSA standards. The self-study process results in a well-written self-study report that reflects the results of the self-evaluation and provides a source of direction for the school's future.

Team Visit

At the conclusion of the self-study process and after school readiness is reported by the appointed consultant, a visiting team is appointed by the NLSA Director. The team visits the school for two to three days to evaluate and validate the school's self-study report in light of the school's mission and NLSA Standards and Indicators of Success. The team prepares a comprehensive written report that shares its findings and recommends whether the school should be accredited. Copies of the report are shared with the school, the district accreditation commission and the NLSA national office in St. Louis.

Accreditation Application Reviewed

The district accreditation committee reviews the school's self-study report and visiting team report and makes a second recommendation for or against the school accreditation status.

The national accreditation commission takes final action on the two previous recommendations and awards or denies the school's accreditation. If accreditation is awarded, a certificate is presented to the school by the district education executive or NLSA commissioner at a public event or worship service.

On-Going Improvement

Annual reports submitted to and reviewed by the district accreditation document the school's efforts at ongoing improvement.

OVERVIEW OF A TEAM CAPTAIN'S RESPONSIBILITIES

The visiting team captain's work is primarily focused upon an event: the team's visit to the school. Much preparation, communication and coaching must be carried out in order to lead a team visit successfully. The team captain's responsibilities can be organized in four distinct areas: Preparing for the Site Visit; Guiding and Directing the Activities of the Visiting Team; Preparing the Team Report; and Leading the Exit Report.

1. Preparing for the Site Visit

Selection of the Visiting Team

National Lutheran School Accreditation requires a visit by a team of qualified observers. The purpose of the visiting team is to provide an unbiased response to the self-evaluation carried out by the school, the school's plans for improvement, and to make recommendations for further improvement.

■ Standards Based Team Selection

The captain and the visiting team are recruited by the school administrator, recommended by the DAC, and appointed by the NLSA Director.

At least two members of the visiting team shall have previous experience with National Lutheran School Accreditation, either as a member of a visiting team or as a faculty member of a school that has completed or is currently involved in the accreditation process. Team members from Lutheran schools who have not completed the NLSA process are encouraged.

Team members will be selected from the following types of members:

- A. The captain (selected from the district list of approved, trained potential captains).
- B. A teacher or administrator from a non-LCMS Christian school.
- C. A teacher or administrator from another LCMS school.
- D. A public school teacher or administrator. (Where practical, this person may be an LCMS congregation member.)
- E. A pastor of another LCMS congregation with a school.
- F. A specialist, college professor, or staff person from district or national LCMS offices.

The following minimum number of site visitors shall be required, chosen from the suggested members listed above according to the size of the school to be visited:

Students	Minimum Team	Types of Members
1-50	3	A,B,C
51-150	4	A,B,C,D
151-250	5	A,B,C,C,D
251-350	6	A,B,C,C,D,E
351 or more	7	A,B,C,C,D,E,F

Additional team members from any type of members may be selected and added to the team. Careful attention should be given to the selection of visiting team members in order to have competency and balance. Members of the visiting team should know the characteristics of a good school program and represent the level of the school being visited. Official letters of appointment should be sent to all visiting team members by the school administrator after appointment by the NLSA Director.

■ Ongoing Improvement Team Selection

Three or more individuals are appointed by the NLSA Director to serve on an ongoing improvement visiting team. The school suggests the visitors, the district recommends, and the NLSA Director appoints visiting team members. Team members are:

- An NLSA trained team captain will lead the team.
- The NLSA appointed consultant will be another of the site visitors.
- Other team members will have expertise in the field/areas that are addressed in the SIP.

■ Preparing Standards Based Team Members for Effective Service

Accreditation standards for Lutheran schools are organized into 11 sections. The team will be subdivided into responsibilities directly related to those sections. Assignments should be made well in advance of the site visit so team members can prepare adequately for their tasks.

The 11 sections of the standards are:

1. Mission and Vision
2. Relationship
 - School and Congregation
 - School and Community
 - School Climate
3. Leadership
 - Governance
 - Administration
4. Personnel
5. Curriculum
6. Instruction
7. Student Services
8. Health and Safety
9. Facilities
10. Finance
11. Evaluation

The curriculum section is subdivided into committees for each subject (religion, mathematics, computer education, reading, language arts, social studies, science, art, physical education, and any other subjects in the curriculum). The captain first needs to determine how the candidate school titles its curricular areas and then to assign them to his or her team. In this way, team members with specific curricular expertise are able to visit classrooms while their subject of interest is being taught. In addition to each of the subjects, a team report on the general curriculum is written. Since the individual curricular areas provide evidence compliance with Standard V, Curriculum, it is not necessary to address the compliance area when writing reports in these areas.

Sample Team Assignments

A sample list of the responsibilities for a team of seven members follows:

TEAM MEMBER	MAJOR RESPONSIBILITY SECTIONS	MINOR RESPONSIBILITY SECTIONS
Mary (captain)	1, 2 (religion)	6, 11 (social studies)
Sam	10, 11 (mathematics, computer education)	12 (science, physical education)
Jennifer	4 (physical education)	8, 10 (religion)
Sue	7 [general] (reading, music)	(art, mathematics, music)
David	3, 6, 8	5, 9 (language arts)
Fred	9 (social studies, science)	1, 2, 7 [general]
Alice	5 (art, language arts)	3, 4 (reading)

“Major responsibility” means to “chair” the committee and write the report with the assistance and observations of the person with “minor” responsibility for that section.

■ Preparing Ongoing Improvement Team Members for Effective Service

In preparation for the team visit, each of the team members should review the school's Standards Checklist, the accompanying explanations, and material. Together they should evaluate whether or not the school meets the expected level of achievement for National Lutheran School Accreditation.

It is suggested that the goals included in the School Improvement Plan (SIP) be divided among the visiting team members so that each of the team members is responsible for carefully reviewing one or more specific goals and its attendant objectives and strategies for completion. Get the goals from the school well in advance of the visit so you can divide them according to each team member's interest and specific expertise.

At the site visit, the team members should submit their reactions to the Standards Checklist and to the School Improvement Plan. These reactions should be presented for review and acceptance by the whole team, so that all sections of the report become part of the whole team report, rather than a report by individual team members. Each recommendation must be reviewed and accepted by all members of the team.

Sample Team Assignments

- A. All three team members are to review and write a tentative report on the Standards Checklist.
- B. Captain: Goals 1 and 4 and Report Summary
 - Consultant: Goals 2 and 6
 - Team Member: Goals 3, 5 and 7

2. Guiding and Directing the Activities of the Visiting Team

Not all members of visiting teams are experienced in school accreditation reports, processes, or visits. Although it is expected that each team member will rely primarily on professional knowledge, personal experience, insights, and common sense, the following suggestions will help each member realize the scope of the task before them. These suggestions are not meant to limit the professional observations of the site visitor, but to provide some guidance for those observations.

1. Be concerned primarily for major issues rather than looking for nits to be picked. Keep in mind the school's philosophy and mission and your purpose—that of helping the school improve.
2. Keep in mind the comments made by the school staff in the self-study report and accompanying information. At times you may want to affirm what is said in that report. There is no excuse for not knowing what is said there.
3. The basic question for the site visit is to determine how effectively the school carries out its purposes and meets the needs of the students. Don't let little incidents or superficial concerns distract you from the larger purpose of your visit and report.
4. During a Standards Based process, visit every teacher's classroom. Team members must be cautious not to evaluate individual teachers. Even when a teacher requests an evaluation of his or her teaching, it is appropriate for the team members to indicate that their purpose is not to evaluate individuals but rather to observe instruction as a whole. Any rating or specific evaluation of specific teachers is inappropriate either by individual team members or by the team as a whole. If time is available, classrooms may be visited during Ongoing Improvement site visits.
5. You are a professional educator. You have specific skills and abilities. You may be a specialist in a particular aspect of school. You can tell what a good program is compared to a bad program. You have the ability to determine what is effective and what is not. Complete your task with confidence, relying on the God-given abilities that you have. You were selected to be part of this team because of the experiences and knowledge that you bring to the team.
6. Although each educator has a personal educational philosophy, it is not the objective of the visiting team to impose any particular educational thinking on the local staff. Personal opinions or imposing a particular educational philosophy should not be part of your report. It is your professional judgment and evaluation that is needed. You may wish to suggest alternatives to their practices and objectives, but not to indicate that these are weaknesses in the program. Schools are to be observed and evaluated on the basis of national standards and the local school's philosophy and goals, not individual, committee, or team opinions.
7. Actively seek out information. Don't wait for information to come to you. Information that is offered is sometimes the least credible or valuable in writing the visiting team report. Feel free to examine all parts of the school and to ask whatever professional questions you feel are appropriate. Aggressively, yet kindly and professionally, accomplish your task.
8. Time during the site visit is extremely limited. Report to the school prepared with the questions you wish to ask. Look for the specific answers to questions you have and report those. Do not assume that you or anyone else will ever know all the answers to all the questions. It is possible that some of your assumptions based on your observations during the visit are inappropriate. The visiting team is expected to report on what they have observed while they were present and to make professional judgments on the basis of those observations and the print materials received.
9. Stick to your assignment. Look for information specifically related to your assigned goal. You will not be able to observe everything or do every part of the report. Instead, try to determine the major questions or concerns about your areas of responsibility, then seek specific information to help you reach legitimate judgments.
10. As you observe and discuss matters related to your areas of responsibility, you will come to tentative judgments. As soon as such judgments are made, check them out. Evaluate whether or not your tentative judgments are legitimate. Share them with other team members, but not with members of the local staff. However, by asking discreet questions, you can check out your tentative judgments with the staff without

letting them know what your judgments are.

11. Throughout the visit, be willing to modify your tentative judgments. Keep observing. Don't assume you know all the answers.
12. The art of questioning without revealing tentative judgments requires a great deal of careful thought. Ask opening, not leading, questions of the staff. Do not vent your judgments or evaluations. By all means, don't criticize what an individual is telling you. However, do try to get that person to elaborate sufficiently so that you have evidence that indicates what they have said is true.
13. Watch and listen carefully. Sometimes what you see or hear is done for a particular purpose. Be aware of those purposes and evaluate the obvious on the basis of the purposes.
14. Evaluate things that you see or hear based on the situation in which you see or hear them. Some statements and actions are based totally on a specific situation and are not typical of the school operation.
15. Discuss the school and all of your observations with colleagues on the team. Share none of them with members of the staff at any time. Compare your tentative findings with insights from other team members.
16. Although you may have many suggestions that you would like to offer during the visit—or ideas for changing things—or appropriate observations—withhold any comments until you write the report. It is your role to listen and observe during the visit, not to suggest verbally or to make comments.
17. Use available resources to make sure your comments are legitimate. Resources include all exhibits made available to support the Self-Study Report, Notes of Clarification and other NLSA manuals, and the students/children at the school.
18. Before you draw final conclusions, be sure you have sufficient facts to support them. If there is any doubt in your mind about something that you have assumed, check it out again. It is a great embarrassment to find that your conclusion is based upon biased or faulty information.
19. Already, when reading the school's Self-Study Report, you probably have reached some tentative conclusions about what you will find at the school. Be careful that those tentative conclusions, made without ever seeing the school, are tested over and over again during the school visit. Be sure that your report is based upon your observations and judgments made during the site visit and from materials you receive.
20. As recommendations are considered, do your best to make them realistic in terms of the school. Sweeping, unrealistic recommendations are of no value. Only those recommendations that are realistically attainable are helpful. However, do not avoid making any recommendations for additional resources if the local school claims not to have sufficient funds. There are appropriate improvement goals for every school.
21. Evaluate the comments made in each section of the self-study report. At times there will be comments made there that should be repeated in the site visit report. In that way the local school and its constituents may be helped to accomplish their reasonable goals.
23. For the OI process, check the validity and results of assessment techniques. Ensure that listed needs are real.
24. For the OI process review the selected goals carefully, for they are the heart of the School Improvement Plan (SIP) and the improvement that will result. Relate each one to the assessment technique on which it is based. Check its validity.
25. For the OI process, make certain that school leaders know and are comfortable with the NLSA Ongoing Improvement process and were involved in the development of appropriate written goals, objectives, and strategies. All elements of the school improvement plan must follow NLSA definitions and examples or, if prepared in connection with another accreditation process, must be acceptable for both accreditation processes.

Responsibilities of Team Members

Individual Team Member

1. Be professional. Use professional judgment. Hold whatever information you receive in strictest confidence. Inquire, don't criticize. Make professional judgments, don't share them with staff.
2. Read and study the self-study report, taking special note of those parts that deal with your specific assignments.
3. Attend pre-visit meetings punctually. Spend all required time on the site visit. You will not be able to schedule any other business during the days spent on the site visit.
4. Serve on assigned committees. Chair some. Assist others.
5. Write your report professionally and on time.
6. Make observations and test those observations before making judgments. Test tentative judgments before writing the report.
7. Prepare the written reports for each of the committees to which you have been assigned major responsibility. This is to be done in cooperation with the other committee members.
8. Avoid criticisms of or reference to individual personalities or abilities.
9. Provide helpful, specific, realistic recommendations for each area of concern you note.
10. Be an active participant in the visiting team's oral report.
11. Pray for the school and your part in its accreditation.

Committee Chairpersons

1. For those standards and subjects for which you are responsible, call committee meetings. Direct the efforts of the committee and be responsible for the committee report.
2. Schedule classroom visits for committee members so all teachers are observed by at least two different individuals at different times.
3. Provide the written report to the visiting team as a whole for its approval.
4. Revise the report based on the visiting team's comments and present it in final form to the captain.
5. Be prepared to give a brief oral report to the school faculty at the end of the visit.
6. Provide an appropriate written report to the team captain before leaving the school site.
7. Pray for your leadership and the team as a whole. Resolve to give witness to your faith whenever possible during the visit.

The Visiting Team as a Whole

1. Review the Statement of Philosophy and the objectives of the school.
2. Read and study the whole school self-study report.
3. Help all team members accomplish their tasks.
4. Become acquainted with the school, its congregation, and its community.
5. Prepare an overall evaluation of the school and state it in the "Report Summary." This overall evaluation will probably be the main portion of the exit report that the visiting team makes to the faculty and other individuals on the last day of the visit.
6. Carefully evaluate all committee reports and make appropriate suggestions for changes. All parts of the visiting team report should be acknowledged and approved by the entire team. The final written report is a report of the whole team, not only of individuals serving on specific committees.

3. Preparing the Team Report

There are significant differences in process, content and appearance between the way two types of team reports are prepared and appear. The **Standards Based** process focuses its efforts on the school's evaluation of compliance with Required NLSA standards and Indicators of Success. The report is set up to validate the school's work that area. The **Ongoing Improvement (OI)** process reflects on Standards Compliance but focuses more completely on ongoing school improvement that is illustrated in the School Improvement Plan. The OI visiting team report reflects that emphasis. Examples of both types of reports can be found in the addendum of this manual. For the purpose of clarity, the section on team reporting will be divided into two sections:

- 1) Preparing the Standards Based Visiting Team Report
- 2) Preparing the Ongoing Improvement Visiting Team Report

■ The Standards Based Accreditation Team Report

Writing the report is the most important part of the visiting team's task. Therefore, the report must be carefully written. The content of the written report has a great influence upon the morale and future progress of the school.

The report for each section contains five distinct parts:

- A. Overview
- B. Compliance
- C. Strengths
- D. Concerns
- E. Recommendations

For each strength and concern, the source of information should be noted by the code:

- 1 = self-study report
- 2 = interview
- 3 = observation
- 4 = written documentation

Every concern should numerically refer to the standard(s) to which it relates.

Overview

The overview should be an objective statement of what is, devoid of any concerns or recommendations. It should provide a brief, general look at this part of the school.

Compliance

This is a statement that communicates (YES or NO) that all the Required Standards and Indicators of Success have been met. Standard compliance is determined by adding a total of Lichert Scale point indicators and reaching the total required in each section for compliance.

Strengths

It is important that the section on strengths includes specific parts of the school that deserve note and commendation. It is vital that the report contain nearly as many strengths as concerns where possible. The purpose of the report is to help, not to criticize unduly or to leave the staff with a feeling of despair.

Concerns

Without indicating that a particular facet of the school is a weakness or a limitation, it is appropriate that the report indicate concerns expressed the visiting team. Avoid relating insignificant details and focus on major issues. Base your specific concerns on specific observations. Relate each identified concern to an NLSA standard. This may be the most vital part of the report since it indicates places where continued improvement must occur.

Recommendations

For every concern there should be at least one associated recommendation. A report that lists only concerns does not provide assistance for improvement. Recommendations are based on the team's professional judgment and experience. They are suggestions, not requirements for the school to consider. Recommendations provide realistic suggestions that the school could address in its efforts at improvement.

Specific Suggestions for Report Writing

1. Maintain five separate categories within each section of the report (Overview, Standards Compliance, Strengths, Concerns, Recommendations).
2. Determine required standard compliance by using the numerical formula as determined by the Lichert Scale for each section.
3. Within each section of your report, number each of the strengths, concerns, and recommendations.
4. Write carefully, using complete sentences and correct grammar and spelling. The quality of the report helps convey the importance of the accreditation process.
5. Submit assigned reports to the team captain before you leave the school.
6. Make your report format objective rather than personal.
7. Follow the format and examples of the samples of reports in the addendum of this manual.
8. Cite the source of information (observation, documentation, interview, self-study) for the strengths and concerns in your report. Cite the applicable standard and indicator of success.
9. Ensure that the "Report Summary" (the last page of the report) includes the team's recommendation about accreditation and any outstanding strengths or major deficiencies. A major deficiency is any condition that is based on an NLSA standard which has a severe negative effect on the quality of education, the ministry of the school, and/or endangers the health and safety of the school population. The deficiency must be remedied by the school within the time parameters prescribed by the team (no longer than two years).

A sample of a standards based visiting team report can be found in the addendum of this manual.

■ The Ongoing Improvement Team Report

The ongoing improvement site visitation report has five distinct parts:

1. Accreditation Recommendation
2. Team Checklist
3. Standards Checklist Report
4. School Improvement Plan
5. Report Summary

A brief description of each of these is given below.

Accreditation Recommendation

On the basis of team consensus, check the box (yes or no) to indicate the team's recommendation.

Team Checklist

Items listed on this yes/no checklist should be considered "givens." If the team feels one or more items should be checked "no," the school's accreditation is in jeopardy. Any "nos" should be explained.

Standards Checklist Report

First write a brief paragraph verifying the legitimacy of the "yes" responses on the Standards Checklist. Then write a paragraph evaluating the comments and explanations related to the negative responses, indicating whether or not they are acceptable. If there are any incomplete or inadequate explanations, these should be noted with attendant recommendations for improvement. If there are any "major deficiencies" that have a severe effect on the quality of education, the ministry of the school, and or endangers the health and safety of the school population, these should be listed here and in the Report Summary. Be sure to base your comments on observations, interviews, and materials received.

School Improvement Plan Report

Probably the crux of this report is an evaluation of whether or not the SIP goals are legitimate, based on adequate needs assessments that legitimately determine student needs and are sufficiently broad, yet specific enough to be completed by the school.

Objectives and strategies must be measurable so that when evaluation occurs it can be determined whether the strategies and objectives have been met so the overall goal can be met. If any of these are not adequate, recommendations should be made about how specific wording would provide a more adequate goal, objective, or strategy.

If the School Improvement Plan is not appropriate or adequate, the visiting team must include a major deficiency indicating specific inadequacies in the SIP and specific changes that need to be made immediately.

If the goals, objectives, and strategies are adequate and appropriate, the team may make any recommendations felt to be helpful for improvement of the plan. All recommendations for additional goals should be based on observations and evaluation of the standards checklist. If everything in the report seems appropriate, then a simple commendation to continue the good work they have begun to accomplish their goals.

It is possible, but not likely, that the team will make no recommendations for improvement of the SIP. Limit the number of recommendations to less than 20. Each recommendation needs to refer to a specific concern stated in this report.

Report Summary

The Report Summary is to be the last page of the Visiting Team's written report and the only part of that report to be shared at the team's oral (exit) report. The Report Summary includes outstanding strengths of the school and lists any "major deficiencies" determined by the team. A "major deficiency" has a severe negative effect on the quality of education, the ministry of the school and/or endangers the health and safety of the school population.

A sample of the ongoing improvement visiting team report can be found in the addendum of this manual.

Exemplary School Status

Exemplary: serving as a model or pattern, worthy of imitation.

NLSA team visits assure that a school provides quality, Christian education and is committed to ongoing improvement. Occasionally a visiting team observes a school that exceeds quality expectations and exhibits unique “Best Practices.” A visiting team may nominate a school for Exemplary Recognition when the school demonstrates a high degree of excellence by complying with at least 90 percent of the indicators of school success used to quantify compliance with required national accreditation standards in each standard area. But the visiting team must also observe that the school is:

- Christ-centered and service driven.
- Documenting an outstanding record of student academic preparation and success.
- Perceived positively in its community.
- Serving satisfied stakeholders.
- Demonstrating innovative leadership through specific “Best Practices.”

Accredited School Exemplary Status is achieved after a school is found worthy and nominated by an NLSA visiting team or its district education official. Schools may only be nominated in the year of their NLSA team visit. Lutheran schools do not apply for this special award but are recognized for the quality of their programs and established “Best Practices.” The National Accreditation Commission reviews and endorses nominations received from the districts. Schools nominated may then apply for special recognition of exemplary status. Additional supporting documentation and an additional site validation visit assures that the school is worthy of special recognition. Accreditation with Exemplary Status is awarded for school year following the granting of a school’s new accreditation cycle.

Schools may not apply for Exemplary Status. They are found worthy of the accomplishment through observations made by the visiting team at the time of the site visit. The Exemplary School process will allow a school that is selected to intentionally share its “Best Practices” with other LCMS schools in our system. It encourages Lutheran schools to work together, as a system, in order to improve and grow.

In order to nominate an accredited school, the team captain must submit a nomination letter to NLSA Director Terry Schmidt. The letter should indicate specific “Best Practices” observed by the visiting team and assure that the school has met 90 percent of the indicators of success in each standard area. The letter should be prepared separately from the visiting team report and sent to the NLSA director with a copy to the district education executive.

THE WRITTEN SITE VISITORS' REPORT FORM

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 _____ Lutheran School, we:

- recommend NLSA accreditation. do not recommend NLSA accreditation

Name of Team Captain _____

Signature of Team Captain _____ Date _____

Team Checklist

1	YES	NO	The school has successfully completed NLSA Phase I.
2	YES	NO	The school has successfully completed the Standards Checklist.
3	YES	NO	The exhibits are appropriate and complete.
4	YES	NO	The school indicated satisfactory compliance with the NLSA Standards.
5	YES	NO	The narrative summary statement for each section indicates valid reasons for incomplete compliance or non-compliance.
6	YES	NO	The needs assessment adequately identifies school and student needs.
7	YES	NO	The School Improvement Plan states valid, student-centered goals for improving the school's program based on identified needs and NLSA standards.
8	YES	NO	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 Checklist Report

School Improvement Plan Report

Report Summary

FINAL SUGGESTIONS FOR THE TEAM CAPTAIN AS THE REPORT IS PREPARED

1. Reports can be written and edited with ease using laptop computers and projector. It is often possible (but not essential) that the entire report can be edited and left with the school at the end of a visit using this method. Regardless of how the report is prepared, the final edited copy must be given to the school within two weeks of the conclusion of the site visit.
2. Make sure the report is edited, reads well, and accurately reflects the findings of the visiting team.
3. Include the standard disclaimer on the front page of the report. A suggested disclaimer can be found in the addendum of this manual.
4. Be certain that the report indicates if the school complies with all Required Standards and Indicators of Success.
5. Clearly indicate if the team has recommended the school for accreditation (or not). The entire team must support this decision before the visit ends.
6. Write a brief one-page summary that includes the team's recommendation for or against accreditation. The summary page can be left with the school at the conclusion of the oral report. A copy of a summary report is found in the addendum of this manual.
7. Include a list of team members and their qualifications.
8. Complete your portion of the Team Submission Report Form and give the form to the school administrator for inclusion when the reports are forwarded to the district office.
9. Remind the administrator to attach the "General Information" section of the Self-Study Report that was prepared by the school. This is a required element of the materials that are sent from the school to district and national offices.
10. The team captain is finally responsible for the content of the visiting team report. After the report is distributed to the school administrator, the team captain's job is over.

4. Leading The Exit Report

The final task of the visiting team as a whole is to provide a brief exit (oral) report to the faculty and others invited by the school. All members of the visiting team are expected to be present for the exit report. The team captain will lead this report and, ordinarily, the team members will participate in the presentation. This report will be general in nature, perhaps highlighting the “overview” portions of each written report

Before the exit report, the team will prepare the “Report Summary.” This report summary will be shared during the exit report. The only specific recommendation to be given at the exit report is the overall recommendation for or against accreditation. If the team has decided that the school has any “major deficiencies” that have a severe effect on the quality of education, the ministry of the school and/or endangers the health and safety of the school population, these should be listed. The “Report Summary” is to be the last page of the visiting team’s written report.

The team’s exit report usually takes less than 45 minutes. After that time, a brief question-and-answer period may be held. If questions relate to specific recommendations or concerns, ask them to wait for the fully documented, carefully edited final written report that they will receive within two weeks.

During the exit report be sure to:

1. Begin with prayer.
2. Thank the school and the individuals for their gracious hospitality. Be specific.
3. Comment on the cordiality with which you were received.
4. Share your personal appreciation.
5. Share something extra special you observed during the visit.
6. Compliment them on the effort and improvements that have occurred already.
7. Review the contents of the “overview” sections informally.
8. Let each member of the visiting team speak.
9. Read the team’s “Report Summary.”
10. Invite questions.
11. Explain the review process at the district and national levels.
12. If the school is not recommended for accreditation, explain the appeal process.
13. Let them know when they will receive the team’s written report.
14. Remind the school’s administrator to distribute that report, after they publish it, to the district accreditation commission at the district office, the team members, and others at their discretion. Assure them of the team’s confidentiality.
15. Let them know when and how they will hear of the final approval of the team’s recommendation by the national accreditation commission. (Ordinarily, they will receive a letter from the NLSA office in late summer, with the certificate presented by the district education executive or NLSA commissioner in the fall.)
16. Encourage them to realize that school improvement is never over, and that you hope the team’s recommendations will help as they continue that process and prepare annual reports.
17. Close on a positive, happy note. Assure them of their quality (if such assurance is justified).
18. Close with prayer, the Lord’s benediction, and the doxology.

The Ongoing Improvement Process

MID-CYCLE VISIT

The Mid-Cycle Visit is unique to the Ongoing Improvement process. They are used for schools that originally had a seven year plan. Mid-Cycle visits do not occur for schools using a Standards Based Process. Information and samples related to this Mid-Cycle visit are listed below

Who?

The Mid-Cycle Visit will validate, evaluate, and encourage the school in its process of school improvement based on its School Improvement Plan.

When?

The Mid-Cycle Visit will be held:

- At the request of the school administrator to the team captain.
- When a significant portion of the School Improvement Plan has been completed or whenever the visit will be helpful to the school.
- No earlier than two years after the Ongoing Improvement Initial Visit.
- No later than four years after the OI Initial Visit.
- At a time that the school administrator indicates on the Cumulative Annual Report.
- No sooner than three months after the NLSA office and the Visiting Team have been alerted to the date of the visit.
- At a time convenient for the school and the members of the Visiting Team.
- At the request of the Team Captain if not arranged by the school administrator within three years after the Initial Visit.

Who?

The Team Members will be:

- The same team that composed the initial visit team will make up the Mid-Cycle Visiting Team.
- The Initial Visit team captain, consultant, and resource person.
- One additional resource person if requested by the school, approved by the district, and appointed by the NLSA Executive Director.
- If one or more members of the initial visit team are unavailable (death, illness, distance, etc.), the school will suggest, the district will recommend, and the NLSA Director will appoint the replacement.

Whose Responsibility?

The School Administrator is responsible for:

- Contacting the team captain to schedule the Mid-Cycle Visit two to four years after the initial visit.
- Announcing the date arranged with the team captain in consultation with the Mid-Cycle Visit team members.
- Informing the district and NLSA offices in writing no later than three months before the visit.
- Recruiting and requesting team additions or replacements.
- At least 30 days before the team visit, sending each team member the School Improvement Plan and the school's most recent Cumulative Annual Report, with a narrative letter explaining the school's current progress toward meeting the SIP goals, including the evaluation processes used to measure goal completion.
- Arranging logistical details for the visit, including meeting room, secretarial assistance, housing, lunch, etc.
- Including the Visiting Team's written Mid-Cycle Visit Report in the school's Cumulative Annual Report following the Visit.
- Sending copies of the written Mid-Cycle Visit Report to members of the visiting team, the district, and NLSA.

The Team Captain is responsible for:

- Maintaining contact with the school after the initial visit, offering interpretation of team recommendations and other assistance.
- Contacting the school administrator three years after the initial visit to arrange the Mid-Cycle Visit, if not contacted by the school administrator before then.
- Negotiating the date of the Mid-Cycle Visit with the school administrator to make it possible for the team members to be present.
- Communicating with team members.
- Leading the team during the Mid-Cycle Visit.
- Leading the exit report and providing the written Team Report to the school administrator no later than two weeks after the visit.
- Ongoing communication with the school administrator after the visit.
- Completing and sending the Mid-Cycle Visit Report to the school.

Team Members are responsible for:

- Reviewing the SIP, the visiting team's Initial Visit Report, the school's Cumulative Annual Report, and the school's narrative letter before the Mid-Cycle Visit.
- Being present full time at the Mid-Cycle Visit.
- Writing drafts of the team's Mid-Cycle Visit Report before and during the visit.

What?**The Mid-Cycle Visiting Team will:**

- Spend at least one full day on campus, following a schedule established by the school administrator and visiting team captain.
- Review and evaluate the school's progress toward completion of the SIP.
- Review and evaluate the school's progress toward compliance with standards marked "no" on the Ongoing Improvement Standards Checklist.
- Make recommendations in their written report to guide, support, and encourage continued school improvement.

Sample Mid-Cycle Visit Schedules

Sample One Day Visit

7:30 - 8:00	Faculty devotion with visiting team
8:00 - 9:00	Team orientation and task assignments
9:00 - 10:00	Briefing with administrator
10:00 - 12:00	Classroom visits and conversations
12:00 - 1:00	Lunch with students and faculty
1:00 - 1:30	Meet with pastor
1:30 - 2:30	Team discussion and report writing
2:30 - 3:30	Verify and modify team report
3:30 - 4:00	Team meeting
4:00 - 4:30	Oral report to faculty and invited persons
4:30	Exit

Sample Two Half Days' Visit

First Day (Noon–8:30 p.m.)

12:00 - 1:30	Catered lunch on campus with administrator. Get reacquainted and orientation.
1:30 - 3:00	Classroom observations and interviews
3:00 - 3:30	Coffee with faculty
3:30 - 4:00	Meet with pastor
4:00 - 5:00	Team discussion and report writing
5:00 - 7:00	Dinner with administrator, pastor, and board chair
7:00	Individual study and report writing

Second Day (7:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.)

7:30 - 8:00	Faculty devotions
8:00 - 9:00	Observe student arrival, devotions, and religion class
9:00 - 11:00	Review and adapt Team Report
11:00 - 12:00	Verify report validity
12:00 - 1:00	Captain delivers Visitors' Report to school administrator

Visit schedules will vary, depending on the nature of the School Improvement Plan.

Mid-Cycle Visitor's Report

1. Yes No Acceptable progress is being made toward bringing standards that were not in compliance at the time of the Initial Ongoing Improvement Visit into compliance.
Comments and Recommendations:

2. Yes No Acceptable progress is being made in accomplishing the School Improvement Plan.
Comments and Recommendations:

3. Yes No Any changes to the SIP meet with approval by the Visiting Team.
Comments and Recommendations:

4. Yes No Progress toward accomplishing the SIP is measured by legitimate evaluation/assessment techniques and tools.
Comments and Recommendations:

5. Yes No Recommendations made in the Initial Visit have been considered and appropriate actions have been taken.
Comments and Recommendations:

6. Yes No The school staff is working together to improve the school by following the School Improvement Plan.
Comments and Recommendations:

7. Yes No The Mid-Cycle Visiting Team was provided information as requested and received full cooperation.
Comments and Recommendations:

8. Yes No The Visiting Team has concerns and recommendations toward standards compliance and/or accomplishing the SIP.
Comments and Recommendations:

Name of Team Captain: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____

Checklist for Team Captains

A. BEFORE THE VISIT:

1. Contact the school principal upon accepting the assignment as captain.
2. Confer with the principal regarding the visiting team selection.
3. Contact visiting team members as soon as possible after they have accepted the assignment. Include a Visitation Team Biography Form.
4. Set up a detailed time schedule covering the visit in terms of the school's daily schedule.
5. Establish and maintain communication with the school concerning the intended visit.
6. Arrange with the principal for a suitable visiting team meeting room.
7. If you haven't received your copy of the Self-Study one month before the scheduled site visit, you must reschedule the visit. Team members receive the report at least one month in advance of the school visit to adequately prepare for their work at the school.
8. When possible, hold a meeting of the visiting team on site approximately one month before the visit.
9. Arrange visit details with the principal (meals, supplies, technology needs, help, etc.).
10. Arrange, with the principal, suitable housing for the committee, when necessary.
11. Inform each member of the visiting team of the names of the other members and their fields of specialization.
12. Make committee assignments for team members.
13. Ask visiting team members to read the school's Self-Study Report carefully and make notes of statement or inquiry.
14. Study all parts of the school's Self-Study Report carefully.
15. Prepare tentative agendas for your meetings with the team. Be sure to include prayer and devotional opportunities.

B. DURING THE VISIT:

1. Review with the visiting team the purpose, procedures, and precautions listed elsewhere in this manual.
2. Review team member responsibilities and interview schedules. Establish classroom visit schedules for Standards Based school visits.
3. Provide guidance to individual team members as they carry out their tasks.
4. Visit and observe. Be a model team member. Don't have long meetings behind closed doors. Be readily available at all times.
5. Share your notes with other team members. Review their notes as requested.
6. Model questions, techniques, unobtrusive classroom observations, organized note taking, and educational professionalism.
7. Lead (don't dominate) the team's discussion of the tentative philosophy report. Use it as a model for other discussions and reports!
8. Share high standards of report acceptability with the team. Hurried, inadequate reports are not acceptable!
9. Advise, counsel, listen to, and keep team members on task.
10. Review the confidentiality of the report and all its parts with anyone involved with its development.
11. At the beginning of each day, review the team's schedule for that day.
12. For Standards Based visits ensure that each teacher is observed at least twice, by different team members. Be certain that each subject is observed in at least two different classrooms.
13. Arrange for either the whole team or appropriate team members to meet briefly with the pastor(s).
14. Validate that the school has complied with all Required Standards and Indicators of Success.
15. Discourage disrupting the education of students during the visit.
16. Review rough drafts of committee reports before they are considered by the team.
17. Lead the discussion following each committee report.
18. Assist committees as they revise tentative reports according to team discussions.
19. Lead a brief discussion of revised reports to the team to gain consensus approval.
20. Lead the team in identifying any major deficiencies. A major deficiency is any condition based on

an NLSA standard that has a severe negative effect on the quality of education, the ministry of the school, and/or endangers the health and safety of the school population. List these, if any, in the final report summary written by the team captain and indicate the time limit for them to be addressed, never longer than two years.

21. Collect all final reports before dismissing the team.
22. Lead the presentation of the verbal team exit report.
23. Personally thank everyone for their cooperation.
24. Give team members an "Evaluation of the Team Captain by Team Members" form and ask them to send it to the NLSA office. Give the school administrator the Team Report Submission Checklist after completing the form.

C. AFTER THE VISIT

1. Thank the team members.
2. Thank the schools that released team members for the site visit.
3. Thank the school for its hospitality.
4. Edit the team report as needed without changing its substance. Be sure to include pages 5-8 of the Self-Study Report Form and biographical information on team members.
5. Within two weeks, send a final copy of the team report to the school for reproduction and distribution.
6. Review the final production of the team report.
7. Instruct the principal to send a copy of the final team report to each team member, and the required number to the District Accreditation Commission. It is no longer necessary to send copies of the visiting team report to the national office in St. Louis.
8. Give the principal a copy of "School Evaluation of Consultant" forms and ask the principal to send them to the NLSA office. Remind the school administrator to complete his section of the Team Report Submission Form and include it when he sends the required number of team reports to the district office.
9. Remind the principal of the responsibility of ongoing improvement and the annual reporting.
10. Be available to the school principal to answer questions and offer clarification regarding items in the team report.

ADDENDUM TO THE CAPTAIN'S MANUAL

This addendum contains many resources and samples that are essential to the team captain's roles and responsibilities.

Index to the Addendum

- Addendum A Team Member Assignment Preference Form
- Addendum B Standard Disclaimer Form (for use in every visiting team report)
- Addendum C Sample Format for Team Member Biographies
- Addendum D Sample Visiting Team Letter
- Addendum E Sample Standards Based Visitation Team Visit Schedule
- Addendum F Sample Standards Based Visiting Team Report
- Addendum G Sample OI Visit Schedule
- Addendum H Sample OI Team Report
- Addendum I Sample OI Visiting Team Report Summary
- Addendum J Team Captain Evaluation Form
- Addendum K Team Consultant Evaluation Form

ADDENDUM A: Team Member Assignment Preference Form

Please indicate your degree of interest for each of the National Lutheran School Accreditation sections below. On each blank write a "1" for high interest, a "2" or "3" for some interest, or a "4" for little interest. Your responses will help determine the best possible committee assignments for the visiting team members. Think prayerfully and carefully about your preferences and expertise before you complete this form. Please understand that some assignments may be made against your preferences in order to complete team committee assignments. Thank you for your willingness to serve.

- ___ Section I. Mission and Vision
- ___ Section II. Relationships
School and Congregation
School and Community
School Climate
- ___ Section III. Leadership
Governance
Administration
- ___ Section IV. Personnel
- ___ Section V. Curriculum
___ Religion
___ Reading
___ Language Arts
___ Math
___ Art
___ Social Studies
___ Music
___ Science
___ Physical Education
___ Computer
- ___ Section VI. Instruction
- ___ Section VII. Student Services
- ___ Section VIII. Health and Safety
- ___ Section IX. Facilities
- ___ Section X. Finances
- ___ Section XI. Evaluation

TEAM MEMBER _____ HOME PHONE _____

E-MAIL _____ OFFICE PHONE _____

(Return promptly to Visiting Team Captain.)

ADDENDUM B: Standard Disclaimer and Foreword

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 rest solely in the hands of the school administration. Neither the captain nor the other 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.

Foreword

Becoming accredited is a strenuous task. Example 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 exceptionally 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 Example Lutheran School.

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

Example Lutheran School obviously is a good school. This was reflected not only in the self-study, but also in the observations of the visiting team. We were delighted with the whole climate of the school. The schools speaks out for 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 recommendation needs to be done, but each should be seriously considered.

Each member of the visiting team was given responsibility for writing portions of the team's report. This report combines the talent of all members of the team. The report has been written and edited by the team as a whole, with only minor editing done by the team captain. Wherever possible, specific, practical recommendations have been made to help remedy the concerns expressed.

The team members 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 Example Lutheran School so that with the Lord's help they might continue to proclaim His Gospel ever more effectively through Example Lutheran School.

_____, Team Captain

ADDENDUM C

SAMPLE FORMAT: Visiting Team Member Biographical Information

Name: _____

Present position: _____

Education: _____

Areas of expertise: _____

Previous experience on an Accreditation Team: _____

School Location _____ Accreditation process _____ Year _____

ADDENDUM D

Sample Letter to the Members of Visiting Team

A sample letter to team members from the team captain is below. Modify it to meet local needs.

Dear Friends:

No doubt about it! We have been asked to perform an important task as we visit Immanuel Lutheran School from April 30 to May 2. Our task is to help Immanuel improve its educational program for the benefit of its students. We will do this by observing, discussing and recording information that we hope will be helpful.

Immanuel has already done extensive self-evaluation. At our meeting at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, April 3, you will receive a copy of the school's self-evaluation report. This self-study comprises an essential element of the accreditation process. We are to compare the self-study report based on NLSA standards with our on-site observations and, on that basis, to make recommendations for their school. We are also to determine whether or not Immanuel should be recommended for National Lutheran School Accreditation.

In order to facilitate our work, our team must be subdivided. All our committee reports will be discussed by the whole team, but the individual reports will be written entirely by the committees. Each of you will be given major responsibility for some committees and minor responsibility for others. Enclosed is an "Assignment Preference Form." It will help me make committee assignments. Please return it to me right away. I will share tentative committee assignments with you on April 3.

Thank you for giving of your time and of yourself to serve on this visiting team. I, your team captain, hope that I can be of assistance to each of you and can facilitate the work of the team so that our work can be done as effectively as possible.

I look forward to meeting each of you in person on the third. I promise to dismiss that meeting no later than 10 p.m. As a reminder, keep track of your mileage. You will be reimbursed for your mileage at the current rate.

Serving the Master Teacher,

Team Captain

ADDENDUM E

Sample Agenda: Standards Based Visit Schedule I

First Day: 1 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

- 1:00 - 1:30 Brief orientation
- 1:30 - 3:00 Initial classroom observations
- 3:00 - 3:30 Coffee with faculty
- 3:45 - 5:00 Team meeting
- 5:30 - 6:30 Reception with board members and steering committee
- 6:30 - 8:30 Dinner together

Second Day: 8 a.m. – evening

- 8:00 - 9:00 Team meeting (review report on philosophy)
- 9:00 - 11:30 Classroom observations and committee meetings
- 11:30 - 12:30 Lunch with students and faculty
- 12:30 - 1:30 Team meeting
- 1:30 - 3:00 Classroom observations and committee meetings
- 3:00 - 3:45 Faculty interviews
- 3:45 - 5:00 Team meeting
- 5:00 - Initial report writing

Third Day: 8 a.m. – 4 p.m.

- 8:00 - 9:00 Team meeting
- 9:00 - 11:00 Verify concerns and legitimacy of recommendations
- 11:00 - 12:00 Write reports
- 12:00 - 3:00 Catered lunch to team. Write and share reports.
- 3:00 - 4:00 Exit report to faculty, staff, and invited persons

SAMPLE AGENDA: Standards Based Visit Schedule II

First Day: Monday

- 7:40 - 8:00 Faculty devotion with visiting team
- 8:30 - 9:00 Briefing with administrator
- 9:00 - 12:00 Initial classroom observations and interviews
- 12:00 - 1:00 Working lunch in the “team room”
- 1:00 - 3:30 Observations, interviews, notetaking. (Writing philosophy report.)
- 3:30 - 4:00 “Mixer” with teachers—fellowship and social time
- 4:00 - 5:00 Scheduled meetings with individuals, groups, committees, departments, etc.
- 6:00 - 7:00 Dinner with board members and steering committee
- 7:30 - 10:00 Initial report writing

Second Day: Tuesday

- 7:40 - 8:00 Faculty devotion
- 8:00 - 9:00 Team meeting (review report on philosophy)
- 9:00 - 12:00 Observations, interview, writing
- 12:00 - 1:00 Lunch with students and faculty
- 1:00 - 1:30 Team meeting—check process
- 1:30 - 3:00 Classroom observations and committee meetings
- 3:00 - 3:45 Faculty, staff, committee interviews
- 3:45 - 4:30 Mixer with faculty
- 4:30 - 5:15 Team meeting
- 5:15 - 6:00 Break

6:00 - 7:30 Eat out
7:30 - 9:00 Combined team work session—writing and rewriting

Third Day: Wednesday

7:40 - 8:15 Faculty devotion
8:15 - 9:00 Team meeting
9:00 - 10:00 Final observation, interviews, writing
10:00 - 12:00 Combined team work session; complete writing
12:00 - 2:00 Working lunch in team room; finalize report; glean major recommendations.
2:00 - 2:30 Break
2:30 - 3:00 Preparation of verbal exit report. Team members fill out expense vouchers and give to captain. Team has time of praise and prayer.
3:15 - 4:00 Team captain leads the exit report with faculty. At the conclusion of the report, the visiting team departs.

ADDENDUM F

Sample: Standards Based Team Report

FOREWORD

Becoming accredited is a strenuous process. When, as is true at Immanuel Lutheran School, the school desires to become accredited by more than one agency, the task becomes even more arduous. Immanuel 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 exceptionally 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 Immanuel Lutheran School.

The committee hereby expresses sincere gratitude to the faculty, staff and students at Immanuel 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.

Immanuel 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 Immanuel. 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 13 members of the visiting team were divided into 21 committees. 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. Each part of this report follows the following format:

1. **Overview.** This provides an introduction and a few observations in general terms about that particular aspect of the school program.
2. **Strengths.** These are the most obvious strengths of the topic of the report.
3. **Concerns.** The committee felt that the school should be aware of these items. They may not be weaknesses, but they gave members of the committee some concern.
4. **Recommendations.** Wherever possible, specific, practical suggestions have been made to help to remedy the concerns expressed.

The team captain and the consultant 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 Immanuel Lutheran School so that with the Lord's help they might continue to proclaim His Gospel ever more effectively through Immanuel Lutheran School.

Team Captain

LEADERSHIP

Overview

Immanuel congregation has established a clearly delineated and detailed organizational structure within the parish. The principal, through the school board, is responsible to the Board of Directors and voters of Immanuel for the effective operation of the school. A comprehensive policy manual has been written.

Compliance

- A. Are all required indicators of success met? ___YES ___NO
B. Is the total for indicators of success a minimum of 72 points? ___YES ___NO

Strengths

(1 = self-study report, 2 = interview, 3 = observation, 4 = written documentation)

1. Written, detailed personnel policies and procedures are available. (1, 4)
2. The professionalism and Christian commitment of the administrator and staff are very noteworthy. This has a profound impact upon the congregation and community-at-large. (2, 3)
3. The administrator and school board have shown a great amount of leadership in curriculum development

- and policy formulation. (2, 3, 4)
4. Procedures for effective communication during emergencies have been devised and are clearly communicated in written form. (4)
 5. Excellent procedures for annual faculty and staff evaluations have been developed. (1, 2, 4)
 6. The plan for summer use of faculty time allows for an orderly process in class scheduling, professional growth, and curriculum development. (1, 2, 4)

Concerns and Recommendations

(1 = self-study report, 2 = interview, 3 = observation, 4 = written documentation)

1. **(Concern)** The job description of the principal does not allow enough time for supervision of personnel. (1, 2) (Standard 5B:13)
(Recommendation) Update the job description of the principal to consider providing for full-time administration.
2. **(Concern)** The principal lacks the necessary course work for his administrative certificate. (1, 2, 4) (Standard 5B:03)
(Recommendation) Provide time, encouragement, and assistance to the principal while he is working toward the state administrative certificate.
3. **(Concern)** The congregation has not addressed the problem of separation of the school office from the two classroom buildings. (1, 2, 3) (Standard 11:12)
(Recommendation) Ask the parish planning committee to address the needs of the church and school offices and prioritize these into any other remodeling plans. Supervision, faculty meetings, school discipline procedures, and communication would be enhanced by incorporating the offices into the classroom building.
4. **(Concern)** Written job descriptions for teachers do not exist.(4) (Standard 5A:10)
(Recommendation) Prioritize the development of faculty job descriptions.
5. **(Concern)** The summer organizational plan for staff does not serve the interests of the entire parish. (1, 2) (Standard 2:03)
(Recommendation) Devote a percentage of faculty summer work to total parish service. This should be done with the consultation of all involved.
6. **(Concern)** Although the policy manual is quite comprehensive, there apparently is a need to carefully examine whether all divisions function as outlined. (2, 4) (Standard 5A:07)
(Recommendation) Re-examine the policy manual to determine where various divisions are unclear in responsibilities.
7. **(Concern)** The administrator should have a greater amount of input into school building maintenance. If he is responsible for health and safety, then he needs to be able to help determine building needs and priorities for maintenance and repair. (2) (Standard 11:08)
(Recommendation) The principal should be given the power to correct emergency repairs and maintenance.
8. **(Concern)** The preschool is separated by distance from the resources of the administrator. (3) (Standard 11:01)
(Recommendation) Evaluate the possibility of establishing a preschool director to help the principal in the administration of the preschool.
9. **(Concern)**There are no signs to direct visitors to the administrative offices. (3) (Standard 11:01)
(Recommendation) Place signs in convenient locations around the school to direct visitors to the administrative offices.

ADDENDUM G

Sample OI Visits

SCHEDULE I

First Day: 1 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

- 1:00 - 1:30 Brief orientation
- 1:30 - 3:00 Classroom observations and interviews
- 3:00 - 3:30 Coffee with faculty
- 3:45 - 5:00 Team meeting to review tentative reports and plan to verify conclusions in the reports
- 5:30 - 6:30 Reception with board members and steering committee
- 6:30 - 8:30 Dinner together, followed by individual writing

Second Day: 8 a.m. - 1 p.m.

- 8:00 - 8:15 Faculty Devotions
- 8:15 - 9:15 Verify report conclusions
- 9:15 - 10:30 Team meeting to approve report revisions
- 10:30 - 12:00 Final writing and plan for the exit report
- 12:00 - 1:00 Exit Report

SAMPLE: OI Visit Schedule II

First Day: Monday

- 7:40 - 8:00 Faculty devotion with visiting team
- 8:00 - 9:00 Briefing with administrator and pastor
- 9:00 - 12:00 Initial classroom observations and interviews
- 12:00 - 1:00 Working lunch in the "team room" to review initial observations and tentative team reports
- 1:00 - 3:30 Observations, interviews, note taking.
- 3:30 - 4:00 "Mixer" with teachers; fellowship and social time
- 4:00 - 5:00 Scheduled meetings with individuals, groups, committees, departments, etc.
- 6:00 - 7:00 Dinner with board members and steering committee
- 7:30 - 10:00 Initial report writing

Second Day: Tuesday

- 7:40 - 8:00 Faculty devotion
- 8:00 - 9:00 Team meeting to review individual reports
- 9:00 - 10:00 Verify report conclusions
- 10:00 - 11:00 Team meeting to accept final reports, rewrite as needed, and plan for the exit report
- 12:00 - 1:00 Exit reports

ADDENDUM H

A Sample Written OI Team Report

Much of this sample has been taken from actual OI Visiting Team Reports that model the way reports should be written. The SAMPLE report has been abbreviated for space concerns.

1. 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 _____ Lutheran School, we:

recommend NLSA accreditation. do not recommend NLSA accreditation

Name of Team Captain: Charles Larsen

Signature of Team Captain _____ Date: 2/10/2003

2. TEAM CHECKLIST

1	YES	NO	The school has successfully completed NLSA Phase I.
2	YES	NO	The school has successfully completed the Standards Checklist.
3	YES	NO	The exhibits are appropriate and complete.
4	YES	NO	The school indicated satisfactory compliance with the NLSA Standards.
5	YES	NO	The narrative summary statement for each section indicates valid reasons for incomplete compliance or non-compliance.
6	YES	NO	The needs assessment adequately identifies school and student needs.
7	YES	NO	The School Improvement Plan states valid, student-centered goals for improving the school's program based on identified needs and NLSA standards.
8	YES	NO	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.

3. STANDARDS CHECKLIST REPORT

Trinity Lutheran School's completed checklist indicates that 90 percent of the NLSA standards have been met. Observations and interviews by the Visiting Team verify that this is an accurate evaluation of the school and its program.

Clear and specific explanations provided defensible reasons for not meeting five of the 10 unmet standards. The administration and governing board are encouraged to revisit those standards periodically to determine if satisfactory progress is being made toward compliance and to explain to the Mid-Cycle Visiting Team what progress has been made.

However, the narration for five of the standards offered no clear indication of plans for improvement. There, the Visiting Team makes the following recommendations:

Recommendation #1—Standard 5A:06 (Evaluation of the Administrator)

Concern: The Standards Checklist indicates that the administrator is not evaluated regularly, but, according to interviews, he had been evaluated by the board during the current school year.

Recommendation: The governing board should conduct an annual evaluation of the administrator, including input from faculty and staff, which assesses his strengths and weaknesses so personal and professional growth can be encouraged and facilitated.

Recommendation #2—Standard 6:02 (Certification of Teachers)

Concern: Several of the teachers are not certified by the state.

Recommendation: The governing board is to monitor the progress made toward state certification by the teachers and appropriately recognize the awarding of such certification.

Recommendation #3—Standard 9:05 (Technology Plan)

Concern: The technology plan does not provide for teacher training for technology.

Recommendation: The technology plan should be revised to include provisions for equipping teachers to use technology personally and professionally, and to equip students to use technology in relevant ways.

Recommendation #4—Standard 12:03 (Development of Three-Year Financial Plan)

Concern: A three-year financial plan has not been developed.

Recommendation: Without a well-conceived and carefully developed financial blueprint, many aspects of the School Improvement Plan may be in jeopardy from the outset. High priority must be given to meeting the standard for a three-year financial plan. It is expected that this plan will be available for review by the Mid-Cycle Visiting Team.

4. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN REPORT

The School Improvement Plan (SIP) included four goals that were clearly written and indicated a preferred future condition at the school. Objectives and strategies were specific and well-developed so each goal could be met. The goals were based on valid assessments of legitimate student needs.

Although the SIP as a whole was acceptable, the visiting team has the following concerns and related recommendations:

Goal 1: (Equipping children to be successful Christian citizens)

Concern: The visiting team believes the strategies are not written in a measurable format (i.e. Objective 4A strategies).

Recommendation: Add an eighth objective to this goal, clarifying how the administrator will measure, track, and chart progress toward meeting this goal.

Concern: Trinity is a very homogenous (Anglo) school. Racial and ethical awareness and tolerance are not addressed in this goal's plan.

Recommendation: Review and revise the plan to meet this goal so that students appreciate and appropriately deal with racial diversity in our society.

Goal 2: (School serves congregation and community)

Concern: The SIP is quite specific about recruiting students from the community, but not from the congregation.

Recommendation: Revise the plan to include specific strategies to recruit students from the congregation.

Although most congregation members enroll their children now, an ongoing program to encourage such enrollment is important for future success.

Goal 3: (Equipping students to be effective communicators)

The Visiting Team believes the plan to accomplish this goal is very appropriate and will effectively accomplish the goal.

Goal 4: (Partnerships between the school and school families)

Concern: The plan does not include any provision for classes for parents.

Recommendation: Provide parent education classes twice each school year, either for all parents or for parents of children in specified grades. Educated parents become much better partners with the school.

Concern: The plan does not include partnering with the operating congregation and its members.

Recommendation: Develop services that the congregation will offer to non-member parents, considering such services as: pastoral care in case of emergency, family devotional booklets, member information classes, and worship services.

Recommendation: Involve students in congregational activities regularly. Include such activities as singing for church services, visiting the senior citizens club, sending student made cards to congregation shut-ins, etc.

5. REPORT SUMMARY

Outstanding Strengths:

The Visiting Team is very impressed with these outstanding strengths of Trinity Lutheran School:

- The loving, accepting school climate.
- The thoroughness of the Self-Study Report, including the exhibits.
- The attractive, clean, and educationally appropriate school facilities.
- The unity expressed and observed among faculty and staff.
- The clear, specific, and practical School Improvement Plan.
- The involvement of the whole school community in preparing the SIP.

Major Deficiencies:

Since there is no three-year financial plan to support the School Improvement Plan, the three-year financial plan must be completed and submitted to the District Commission by April 1 of next year.

ADDENDUM I

SAMPLE: OI Report Summary

Outstanding Strengths

- The School Improvement Plan is carefully written and based on real student needs.
- Parents are unanimous in their praise of the school and its outstanding academic program in a caring environment.
- Relationships between the school and the congregation are very supportive. All the professional church workers seem to be good friends and eager to assist one another in ministry and in personal matters.
- Teachers are capable and enthusiastic. Their excitement for learning and creative teaching techniques, coupled with educationally sound, up-to-date learning materials, provide excellent instruction.

Major Deficiencies

- There is no evangelism program in place (Standard 2:09), so the pastoral and administrative team must develop and implement an effective evangelism program to reach the unchurched within the school by August 15, 2003.
- Since the school does not conform to fire and safety regulations (Standard 11:04), the administration must ensure that all facilities conform fully with all applicable fire and safety codes for the safety and protection of facility users before September 1, 2003.
- Since no policy or consistent procedure is in place for dispensing medicine to students (Standard 10B:06), the administration must develop and implement a policy and procedure for dispensation of medication for the health and welfare of children before June 1, 2003.
- Since the curriculum is not reviewed and updated on a regular basis (Standard 7:08), the administrator and faculty, in order to improve instruction, must develop, implement, and adhere to a schedule for updating each curriculum area before June 15, 2003.

John Schmidt
Team Captain

ADDENDUM J

National Lutheran School Accreditation Evaluation of the Team Captain by Team Members

At the end of the visit, each team member is asked to complete this evaluation and return it to the District Education Executive and NLSA office in St. Louis. Circle or underline the word that defines your agreement with each statement. Feel free to make additional comments below as well.

Name of Team Captain _____

Dates of Team Visit _____

Name of School/Location (city/state) _____

1. Communication from the captain was shared with me within a few weeks of my accepting the team position.

Definitely	Generally	Somewhat	No
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2. A detailed time schedule was distributed.

Definitely	Generally	Somewhat	No
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3. The team meeting room was adequate.

Definitely	Generally	Somewhat	No
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4. Details of the visit were well planned (meals, supplies, secretarial help).

Definitely	Generally	Somewhat	No
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5. Housing arrangements were suitable.

Definitely	Generally	Somewhat	No
------------	-----------	----------	----
6. Basic information regarding fellow team members was shared.

Definitely	Generally	Somewhat	No
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7. Assignments were made ahead of time and appropriately explained.

Definitely	Generally	Somewhat	No
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8. My responsibilities as a team member were clearly explained.

Definitely	Generally	Somewhat	No
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9. I was given guidance as to how to carry out my assigned tasks.

Definitely	Generally	Somewhat	No
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10. Questioning techniques, observation procedures, report writing techniques, performance standards, note taking, and educational professionalism were explained and demonstrated.

Definitely	Generally	Somewhat	No
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11. The team captain facilitated the discussion and review of the various committee reports.

Definitely	Generally	Somewhat	No
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12. Consensus of approval was sought.

Definitely	Generally	Somewhat	No
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13. How could the team captain prepare you better to fulfill your role as a team member?

14. If you were asked to serve on another visiting team, would you elect to serve? Why?

Comments

Signature of Team Member

Phone Number

Date

ADDENDUM K

National Lutheran School Accreditation Consultant Evaluation Forms

Within a week after the departure of the Visiting Team, the school administrator should make a copy of and complete the following evaluation of the consultant. This evaluation should be sent along with the Visiting Team Report to your District Education Executive and the NLSA office in St. Louis. Circle or underline the word or phase which best defines your agreement with each statement. Feel free to make additional comments below as well.

Name of Consultant: _____

Duration of Duties _____

Name of School/Location (city/state) _____

1. The preliminary contact was prompt, helpful, and positive.

Definitely	Generally	Somewhat	No
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2. The initial visit by the consultant assisted in setting a tentative timeline, organizing for the process, and planning for exhibits that require advance preparation, planning, and considerable time.

Definitely	Generally	Somewhat	No
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3. Regular contact was maintained by phone or personal visit to review process or goals.

Definitely	Generally	Somewhat	No
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4. The consultant was helpful in suggesting appropriate team captain candidates.

Definitely	Generally	Somewhat	No
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5. The consultant reviewed and shared helpful encouragement and suggestions on sections of the report.

Definitely	Generally	Somewhat	No
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6. The consultant met with the steering committee (or was willing to) to discuss progress and quality while ensuring the participation of a wide variety of school constituents in the process.

Definitely	Generally	Somewhat	No
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7. The consultant gave advice in selecting team members, preparing documents for the team, and encouraged continued progress and quality of process.

Definitely	Generally	Somewhat	No
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8. The consultant reviewed all materials before reproduction and distribution to assure completeness and readiness for the site visits.

Definitely	Generally	Somewhat	No
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9. The consultant was positive and professional in helping the school prepare for the site visit.

Definitely	Generally	Somewhat	No
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10. The consultant was knowledgeable and helpful in sharing the process for distributing reports, announcing readiness to the team captain, and offering ongoing assistance following accreditation.

Definitely	Generally	Somewhat	No
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Comments _____

Signature of Administrator

Phone Number

Date

MISSION STATEMENT

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



Accreditation by National Lutheran School Accreditation (NLSA) indicates that the school successfully completed the NLSA process of self-study, reporting, and evaluation by a visiting team and that the visiting team recommended NLSA accreditation as a result of that visit. It is determined through this process, that the school is worthy of NLSA accreditation. Neither NLSA nor its authorizing agency, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, assume the responsibility for the school's quality (or lack thereof) or for variations from NLSA standards either at the time of initial accreditation or at any time during NLSA accreditation.

National Lutheran School Accreditation
1333 S. Kirkwood Road
St. Louis, M. 63122-7295
1-800-248-1930

Revised 10/11

The Glossary of Terms used in this manual
is found in a separate site on the CD.